

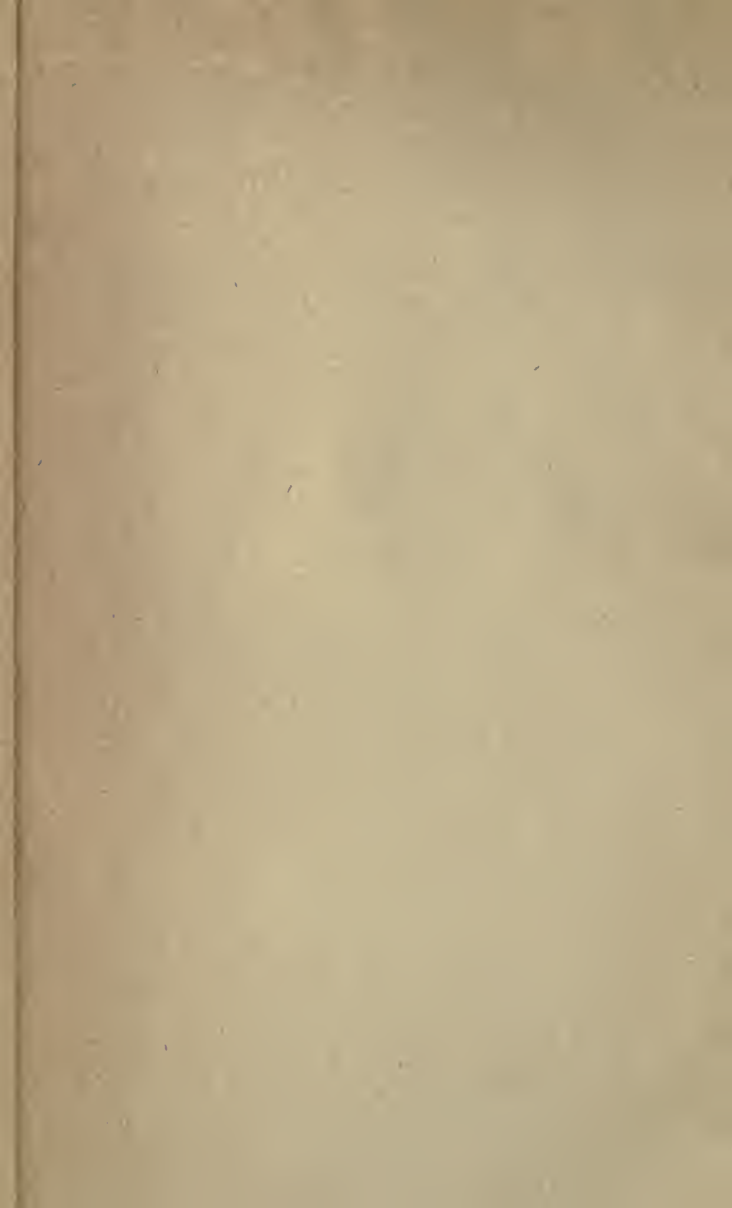




Mary A. Hartwell

Oct. 1897

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WORKS OF JOHN GALT

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ANNALS OF THE PARISH. First  
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THE AYRSHIRE LEGATEES.  
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*Works of John Galt. Edited by D. Storrar Meldrum*

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ANNALS  
OF THE PARISH  
AND  
THE AYRSHIRE LEGATEES

WITH INTRODUCTION  
By S. R. CROCKETT

WITH A PORTRAIT  
AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN WALLACE

VOLUME I

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
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“EVERY EYE IN THE KIRK WAS ON

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# INTRODUCTION





## INTRODUCTION

THERE is no reason why this new edition of the best works of John Galt should require any introduction of mine, save the purely chronological one that it arose out of some words spoken last year at the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution. Certain chance sentences, expressing admiration and appreciation of Galt, fell upon the wayside of a publisher's mind; where, not being instantly devoured by the birds of the air, they sprang up, and, in due course, they brought forth the excellent fruit of this new edition. Having had thus, at least, a left-handed and god-paternal interest in the enterprise, I am called upon to be present at the christening. And this is the only excuse I have for intruding a prefatory word.

But I may be permitted to say why the books of John Galt appear so excellent and

precious to me, and why I am anxious that the world of reading people should not forget him in the press of things new. At the risk of some misunderstanding, I think it best to confine myself to a few personal impressions, without attempting to write, what so many are better qualified than I to undertake, a complete study and estimate of the whole works of John Galt.

This appears the best course, first of all, because I do not care for Galt's "complete works," or anything like them. After suitable, and even gallant attempts, I am now convinced that I shall die without completely perusing "The Spaewife," and "Ringan Gilhaize," not to speak of manifold travels and dramas—that is, unless I happen to be cast upon a desert island with a complete set and nothing else. But even in a crowded and perpetually elbowing library, I manage to keep a shelf, at the right side of an armchair in a highly eligible position, entirely tenanted by the "smytrie o' wee duddy" volumes, all at sixes and sevens as to size and appearance,

which bear on their title-pages the scroll, "By the Author of 'The Annals of the Parish.'" John Galt was not exactly a name to conjure with in his own days—nor, indeed, is it yet. But nevertheless, we must do our best to change all that.

There was never a more ravelled, hither-and-thither life than that of John Galt. Yet there are no books in our national literature which convey so melodious and continuous an impression of peace. The flavour of Galt's best books is exactly that of a bien and comfortable burgher house, in one of the well-conditioned smaller county towns of Scotland—a house which has been inhabited by generations of well-to-do burghesses, whose happy history is, as sayeth the inscription in a Gallo-way kirk-yaird, complete in the record that they "keept shop in Wigtown—and that's all!"

An aroma of fair white linen, woven on looms that are long since worm-eaten into kindling wood, washed by careful housewives, bleached for generations on green knowes by kindly smurrs of warm rain, pressed and folded

with lavender laid in the drawers and between the folds—that is the gracious impression we carry away from the “Annals of the Parish” and “The Provost,” the two books of Galt’s which I love the most.

But there is a warning, and I will set it in the forefront. There are many things which we have been accustomed to find in great fiction, and even in the more clever imitations of great fiction, to which Galt was completely a stranger. Galt’s best books do not contain even the rudiments of a plot. One day progresses after another, much like a *douce* householder’s life in the quiet town of Irvine, punctuated only by the yet greater peace of the recurrent Sabbath-day. There is no plot in the lives of such men, no intrigue save that continual one of couthy self-interest, which Galt treats with a kindliness and an understanding that are unparalleled.

Above all there is no adventure. Things happen, indeed, but no blood is spilt to speak of. Yet one does not resent this monotone—as, for instance, one is apt to do in some

modern Transatlantic novels, where something is always on the point of happening, but never comes off. A recent work of this class held but one excitement between its boards, and that was when a Venetian sentry fired across the Piazza of St. Mark's—and did not hit any one.

But this complaint does not lie against John Galt, for in his books something is happening all the time. True, it is no more than you get into the habit of running to the window to see, if you live long, for instance, in Irvine—a red cart with one creaking wheel, which complains as it goes of the lack of grease at some farm on the hill—a fight between a terrier tyke and a rough herd's collie—or a small difference between the senior burgh officer and Robin the town's crier. These are interesting, and even exciting—in Irvine. But they must be considered from the proper standpoint, which is that of an intimate and well-informed house-dweller in the main street of the town, in the days before railways, when the newsletter came twice a week by the coach, and was read aloud for the public benefit from the steps of the Blue Bell.

“The grammar school was skailing at the time, and the boys, seeing the stramash, gathered round the officer; and, yelling and shouting, encouraged Robin more and more into rebellion, till at last they worked up his corruption to such a pitch, that he took the drum from about his neck, and made it fly like a bomb-shell at the officer’s head.”

Who does not call this sufficiently exciting? Who complains that the incidents do not follow one another quickly enough? How incisive and stirring is the incidence of the characteristic words—“skailing,” “stramash,” “corruption!” These are just the words which the provost would have spoken, had an occurrence so unseemly befallen in the good town of Irvine.

But this admirable passage brings us to another objection to the wide popularity of John Galt, at least in his own day. The matter is not so serious now as it once was, thanks to multiplied editions of Sir Walter, and to other more recent developments. Galt spares no pains to introduce every old and

recondite Scots word he knows. He has no mercy on the ignorant Southron. His books are, indeed, the Larger Catechism of the Scottish language, in so far that they are by no means written for those of weaker understanding.

Not only do his characters speak in dialect in every line of his conversations, but as often as not he writes his ordinary narrative in the same admirable Scots, without a thought of self-consciousness or fine-gentlemanship. Thus his every page is a delight to the initiate ; but I cannot deny that these very pages which delight so many of us, may prove somewhat more than trying to the profane.

These, so far as I know, are the only reasonable indictments which can be brought against Galt. A possible addition might be made on the score of his confessed long-windedness, especially in his later books. But after all, we read Galt as we go to a but-and-ben in the happily unimproved Isle of Arran, prepared to put up with many things for the sake of the large leisureliness, the rustic air, and the en-



compassing quiet of heathery mountains and sheltered sea.

To me, as I have said, by far the best of John Galt's books is "The Annals of the Parish." The "Provost," which comes second, may be more homogeneous, and written, as he himself would say, with more "birr and smeddum." But the character of the writer, though made to emerge with conspicuous skill, is not altogether so sympathetic or delightful as that of the Reverend Micah Balwhidder, for fifty years minister of the parish of Dalmailing.

The third and fourth decades of a man's life make the thinker ; but the first two make the writer. It is from the experiences of these early years that a man makes his backgrounds, and places and develops his characterisations. He may flavour his books with learning and experience more lately gathered ; but at bottom the world of which he writes, is the world of reality or of fantasy, in which he lived till he was twenty. Now on this principle, the ancient, seemly, douce, moderately God-fearing burgh of



Irvine is the foster-mother of most that is excellent in the writing of John Galt. Of course, at times he crosses the breed, and as is the wont of all romancers, he works in the memories of Greenock and other later homes. But the basis and bed-rock are Ayrshire and Irvine. And he is never very successful when he goes farther afield, save when as an alternative he takes some simple people from his native district, and permits them to encounter in a larger and less kindly world the slings and arrows of fortune, which had proved so especially outrageous in his own career.

The town of Irvine is described by the parish minister of Galt's time as then "dry and well-aired, with one broad street running through it from the south-east. On the south of the river, but connected with the town by a stone bridge, there is a row of houses on each side of the road, leading to the harbour. These are mostly of one story with finished garrets, and occupied chiefly by seafaring people. To the north-west of the town there is a commonity of three hundred acres, of a sandy

soil and partly covered with whin and short broom."

Now, almost as clearly as if we could see him, we may take our oaths that on this commony were often to be observed the rough head and twinkling legs of John Galt. Hither assuredly his love for flowers would lead him, and here his mother would feel him to be safe among the whins and the short broom.

For though Galt was quiet, and in youth instant upon his books, he was storing energy and knowledge to sustain the strenuous unrest which filled his later life. Everything he afterwards wrote bore token of a constant observation, which, however cultivated, must primarily have been native to the man. Indeed, Galt is always happiest when he gives free play to his surpassing naturalness. He can hardly tell an adventure with any pith or reality. On the other hand, he can scarcely make a mistake with a character. Of course it is a commonplace that all novelists become their good and bad characters for the occasion.

As the poet sings—

I am the batsman and the bat,  
I am the bowler and the ball,  
The fielders, the pavilion cat,  
The pitch, the stumps, and all.

Or words to that effect.

But Galt does all this and does it more abundantly. Who can doubt that all through his active, unresting, post-to-pillar life, he had dreams and visions of the kind of existence he might have led as minister in some country parish, or, mayhap, as a decent burgher of some small Ayrshire town, troubled with no greater worry than that increase of adipose which in due time would naturally have marked him out for the office of magistrate. In Canada and amid multifarious cares and troubles, Galt could set himself down and take over the duties, the pleasures, the limitations, the standpoint of such a man in that quiet old-world society of the south and west of Scotland. He has indeed given us the best account of it that we can ever hope to get. And he has done it with an ease which apparently is wholly without effort. He was charmed to write; and so we,

if we are at all to the manner born or endowed with a natural capacity for the "Gentle Life," of drowsy villages and farms, are also and equally charmed to read.

But it is the most ungracious though the most natural of comparisons to set Galt beside Scott. It is as unjust to do so as it is to say that Galt derived wholly from him and was stimulated to write by Scott's success. The truth is, as Delta shows in the excellent biography of Galt prefixed to the "Annals," in Messrs. Blackwood's Standard Novels, that the "Annals" and probably some part of the "Legatees" were written before "Waverley." Nevertheless it is certain that Scott created a taste and made a market, so that Galt and others entered in to partake of the fruits of labours which were not wholly their own. But this has solely reference to publication, and in no way detracts from the originality of that great book, "The Annals of the Parish."

Galt's methods were exceedingly simple and natural. When he succeeds best, he always starts out, as it were, without any apparent

intention of telling a story at all. A worthy doctor of divinity, the parish minister of the town of Irvine, falls heir to a legacy from India. Accordingly he and all his family must go to London in order to make the necessary legal arrangements. They write letters home to their own special friends in the parish which they have left. There are few incidents, no adventures. Nothing happens, except the marriage of the minister's daughter to a young officer in the army. In this marriage, for the ordinary romancer, there would have been the opportunity for wars and stratagems, plot and counter-plot—for the relief of comic business, as it might be between a country maid, imported for the purpose, and the marriagcable young male domestics of the metropolis. Even an elopement and pursuit might have been arranged. But no, these things seem never to have occurred to Galt; or if they did, his good angel was certainly at his ear, whispering to him to beware. For when he does essay this mechanism of tale-building in others of his books, he becomes

at once, if not cheap, at least dull and unconvincing.

But, as it is, the interest never for a moment flags, save, as it may be, in some of the windy political prelections of the somewhat priggish Mr. Andrew Pringle. But the author means to produce this effect, as we can see in the plain spoken "observes" with which Mr. Andrew's letters were received by the shrewd, level-headed burgesses and goodwives of the town of Irvine. For instance, the Clyde skipper, who had fallen asleep during the reading of the young advocate's "infinite deal of nothing," exclaimed upon waking, "I thought myself in a fog, and could not tell whether the land ahead was Pladda or the Lady's Isle." Some of the company thought the observation not inapplicable to what they had been hearing, while the most sharp-witted, and keenly orthodox Mrs. Glibbans was even more outspoken in her censure, for she roundly declared the Mr. Andrew Pringle's letter was "nothing but a peasemeal of clishma-clavers; there was no sense in it; it was just like the writer, a canary idiot, a touch here and

a touch there, without anything in the shape of cordiality or satisfaction."

Galt's wonderful skill in characterisation shows itself in every Scottish character he touches. Not only does he bring out all the characteristics of the various writers of the letters—in itself not a small success, for letters are most kittle things to handle in romance—but with equal vividness he presents to us the circle which received them, so that we add to our gallery of acquaintances Dominie Micklewham, the favourite correspondent of the Doctor, Mr. Craig, the orthodox elder—inexorably severe, till he finds that he cannot afford to throw stones at others—Mrs. Glibbans, his fit and ultimate partner, and above all, the "helper" Mr. Snodgrass, eager for a parish, though not quite sure that a rural one will quite suit him—willing, however, to take Irvine on his way to a better, even when coupled with the necessity for espousals with Miss Isabella Todd.

Galt is a tired man's author, and to such as love him there is no better tonic and restorative. It is better than well to read him on a winter's



night by the fireside, tasting every paragraph, too happy and too much at ease to be critical. It is then that the delightfulness of the Doctor, when he has to explain to the difficult Irvine audience that when he went to the theatre in the city of Babylon it was to hear an oratorio, tickles as with a feather those silent humours which lie far below laughter. We turn the delightful pages, stretching luxuriously like a cat on the hearthrug, while the rain dashes and the windows rattle. We do not want incident. At such time Shakespeare is too high for us, even Scott too mighty and many-sided. It is John Galt's hour, and for the fiftieth time of asking we are eagerly interested to know everything that has been going on in the parish of Dalmailing. And the Reverend Micah Balwhidder is, we find, as ready as ever to tell us.

I suppose that it is partly early association which keeps me faithful to the "Annals," in preference to all Galt's other works. For I read that book many years before I had ever heard the name of the author. How such a book came in the "loft" of a decent Cameronian



house, it is perhaps better not asking. I fancy that some grown-up uncle must in time past have secretly conveyed it into the house, unostentatiously deposited between waistcoat and shirt.

At any rate there it was, and it was with deliciously wicked qualms that upon a day of quiet smurring rain, a boy of ten took it out, also under his jacket, into the cartshed; and there with one ear bent for the footsteps of a foreign foe, he made his first excursion to the parish of Dalmailing. To this day that boy can smell the warm damp of the misty summer rain, and hear the complaining of the hens which shared his shelter, and who having no "Annals" to read, did nothing but stare roopily and querulously at the drizzle.

Yet, even as Eve very likely found her apple no great thing after all, I found no spice of popular commandment-breaking in the placid reminiscences of Micah Balwhidder. It was but the mystery of the forbidden which fascinated. For the minister does not settle First and Final Cause, as can now be done with accuracy and despatch over the teacups of the afternoon

curate. His views are in no way dangerous. But the book was a *novèll* (with a strong accent on the second syllable), and therefore in our house forbidden. Yet if any man in all the leaseholds of imagination would seem to be designed to please a good Cameronian, surely that man was the minister of Dalmailing.

I almost despair of giving an idea of the delicacy and dignity of Galt's characterisation in this book. There is no doubt that Micah Balwhidder is the author's masterpiece. Yet there is no laborious working out of traits or heaping up of descriptions. Every part of the minister's character is allowed to emerge with an inevitableness and simplicity which is beyond all art. It is not, indeed, till the third or fourth time of reading that one really understands the strength and power of the man, or how perfectly we seem to know his hero. For we learn to love the good minister better as we become better acquainted with his whimsicalities, and can put our finger readily on the more cross-gained patches—which, even more than his virtues, endear him to us.

We love him as he is "sauntering along the edge of Eglesham Wood, looking at the industrious bee going from flower to flower, and the idle butterfly that layeth up no store, but perisheth ere it is winter." We thrill with interest (that is, if we are of the elect and worthy to tie the latchet of John Galt's shoe) when he feels "a spirit from on high descending upon him, when he is transported out of himself, and seized with the notion of writing a book."

How delightful are his meditations as to what the book is to be! It may be, he thinks, an orthodox poem, like "Paradise Lost," by John Milton. How excellent is the "like"! The book, in fact, as it appears to his mind, is to be as "Paradise Lost," but with additions and improvements; for Milton was not free of Brownism, or at least of the suspicion of that heresy. Mr. Balwhidder will, he tells us, treat more at large of Original Sin, and the great mystery of Redemption. At other times, he fancies that a "connect treatise" on the efficacy of Free Grace would be "more taking." But

even with such inspiring subjects, fresh and original as sin itself, how we sympathise with him when he confesses to us that, owing to the "gilravaging of his servant lasses," and the new thoughts that came crowding into his mind, the whole summer passed away without a single line being written.

It is one of the greatest merits of the book that Galt never condescends to cheap caricature of his greater creations. The whole passage which tells of the minister's great design of writing a book is written directly, simply, sympathetically and without the least exaggeration. Yet how easily could a humorous and amusing list have been made of the possible subjects upon which the Reverend Micah could have exercised himself. I am intimately acquainted with some authors who, I am certain, could not have resisted such an opportunity. Yet undeniably, how much better is the plain inevitable fact.

An example of this exquisite fidelity, in which the art is so concealed that we can hardly believe in its existence, is to be found in the epitaph upon the original Mrs. Balwhidder,

which her distracted husband first proposed to write in Latin—a plan which he abandoned for the excellent and undeniable reason that Latin “is naturally a crabbed language and very difficult to write properly.” The inscription, the composition of which beguiled the lonesome winter nights, is too long for quotation, but may be consulted at length in the “Annals.” It begins :

A lovely Christian, spouse, and friend,  
Pleasant in life and at her end—  
A pale consumption dealt the blow  
That laid her here with dust below.  
Sore was the cough that shook her frame,  
That cough her patience did proclaim—  
And as she drew her latest breath,  
She said, the Lord is sweet in death.

Now, to one who knows the South of Scotland, and is familiar with the rhyming tombstones to be found in almost all its kirkyards, it is hard to believe that these lines are not wholly taken from genuine “throughs,” and not only, as the author himself confesses, the first four lines.

Now, there is no doubt that, as a man of the world and of experience in many lands, Galt quite understood that there was a humorous side to the minister's simplicity. Yet it is to his credit, and, to me, no mean proof of his genius, that he never lets this appear. The writer never appears to be laughing at his own creations.

Still another excellent quality which underlies Galt's books is their mellow view of life. They are written by a man kindly to the core. Douce, pawky, sound-hearted humour lies on the surface of every page. No satyr ever looks at us, grinning goatish in the midst of a paragraph, such as continually surprises us in the sensitive prose of Sterne. The inhuman laughter of the great Dean is never heard. Nay, even the hearty roystering of countryside mirth is mostly banished from Galt's soberly charming pages.

Yet how delightful is that which is present. I do not mistake Galt for either a great writer or a great man. He was of "those humbler poets whose songs gushed from their heart."

He is like the best oatmeal porridge—with cream. It is, to some, no doubt, the finest diet in the world. But, all the same, not every one likes it; and those who do not, cannot understand the taste of those who do. Galt's favourite muse is the muse of About-the-Doors, drab-skirted, yet jocose, kindly, tea-drinking, garrulous, early to bed and early to rise.

We have now much of the writing which glorifies the little quietnesses of the towns and villages of Scotland. Galt deserves much of the credit for that full-eared crop, which in the fulness of time has come after him. He was the first that ever burst into that silent sea. For the Wizard was too great, too completely filled to the brim with incident and the creation of character. He could not be "taigled" with a whole book about the uneventful happenings of one small village. Princes had to rebel, and kings to totter, in order that the epic capacity of his pages might be filled.

But even after Scott, the homeliness of Galt comes to us with a restfulness like a Scottish Sabbath day in the olden times, when the very



barn-yard was not so clamorous as upon ordinary unhallowed days.

It is because of the abundance of this characteristic that I have asked the publishers to include in this edition the "Last of the Lairds," which is one of his latest works, and not, perhaps, in all respects quite one of his best. Yet, even Galt has never surpassed the descriptions of the approaches to the mansion house of Auldbiggings. I may be permitted, all the more that my quotings hitherto have been of the briefest, to extract a few lines and erect them here in the introduction—a loadstone of attraction to some and a danger signal to others. Many persons of respectable life and demeanour, persons even of sound opinions on other subjects, do not, indeed, care for the kind of thing. Luckily, there are others who do, which is so much happiness the more assured to them in their lives, for Galt wrote many books better than the "Last of the Lairds."

"The mansion house of Auldbiggings was a multiform aggregate of corners, and gables, and chimneys. Appended to it, but of somewhat



lower and ruder structure, was a desultory mass of shapeless buildings—the stable, sty, barn, and byre, with all the appurtenances thereunto belonging, such as peat-stack, dunghill, and coal-heap, with a bivouacry of invalided utensils, such as bottomless boyns, headless barrels, and brushes maimed of their handles; to say nothing of the body of the cat, which the undealt-with packman's cur worried on Saturday se'nnight. At the far end was the court-house, in which, when the day was wet, the poultry were accustomed to murmur their sullen and envious Whiggery against the same weather, which was making their friends the ducks as garrulous with enjoyment at the midden hole as Tories in the pools of corruption.

“The garden was suitable to the offices and mansion. It was surrounded, but not enclosed, by an undressed hedge, which in more than fifty places offered tempting admission to the cows. The luxuriant grass walks were never mowed but just before haytime, and every stock of kail and cabbage stood in its gar-

mentry of curled blades, like a new-made Glasgow bailie's wife on the first Sunday after Michaelmas, dressed for the kirk in the monyplies of her flounces. Clumps of apple-ringie, daisies and Dutch-admirals, marigolds and nonesopretties, jonquils and gillyflowers, with here and there a peony, a bunch of gardener's garters, a sunflower or an orange lily, mingled their elegant perfumes and delicate flourishes along the borders. Where the walks met stood a gnomesless dial, opposite to which, in a honeysuckle bower, a white-painted seat invited the laird's visitors of a sentimental turn to read Hervey's 'Meditations in a Flower Garden.' And there, in the still moonlight nights, in the nightingale singing season of southern climes, you might overhear one of the servant lasses keckling with her sweetheart."

There! That is Galt at his best, when he is writing simply and graciously about familiar things. I declare that, even if I were not a Scot, I should love him as much as Goldsmith. And being one, I love him more.

Again when Galt writes in Scots, he writes the

language and not the dialect belonging to any particular locality. He is in the main stream. He belongs to the great tradition. Practically, he writes the Scots of Robert Burns. His vocabulary is not so extensive, his adjectives scanty so trenchant. He is by no means so "free in his discourse" as the poet. But they are essentially shoots of the same stem. They learned, as it were, at one parent's knee. Galt's variety of his Scottish tongue is full of fine old grandmotherly words, marrowy with pith and sap. Scott, like Stevenson, wrote his vernacular a little from the heights. He had learned it, as it were, for love and adventurousness, as men in these days learn Romany. But Galt writes his Scots like one who has been cradled in it, who lisped it in the doorways and cried it to other loons across the street. He lived among men and women who habitually spoke it. In some ways the Doric of Scott may be finer, more literary, a "clear metropolitan utterance" indeed. But, though I reverence Sir Walter above all the sons of men, yet I do say that the Scots, even of Caleb

Balderston and Andrew Fairservice has hardly the rich tang of the mother-earth which I find in the "Annals" and the best books of John Galt. But that may be because I am West-land born, and of the Whigs, Whiggish.

What special words of introduction the present volume requires may be very briefly said. The "Annals of the Parish" is in the main a book of the development of character, a chronicle of episodes. Not only is the shrewd, simple, clever, orthodox and upright old Christian gentleman, with one eye on the stipend and one on the kingdom of heaven, most delicately and sufficiently drawn; but his three wives are so accurately individualised, that we seem to know them almost as well as the husband of their various bosoms. We sympathise with the first somewhat shadowy Mrs. Balwhidder with her imperfect domestic abilities, but her excellent performance of parish duties. We mourn when in providence she was removed by a "dwining," in fatal combination with the loss of twelve pounds of lint, intended, as her bereaved husband affectingly puts the

matter, for “sarking for ourselves, for sheets and for napery.”

A personality even more distinctive, though perhaps less good to live with, is the second Mrs. Balwhidder, whom her dutiful partner delights to think of as a great manager, the bee that gathered the honey; but who did it withal with a birr and jangle which made the honest man greatly regret the piping times of peace he enjoyed with the first Mrs. Balwhidder. Often in his calm and considerate manner would the minister point out to his second spouse the error of her ways, but alas! it did her little good, for the sufficient reason “that she was so engrained with the management of cows and grumphies in her father’s house, that she could not desist — “at the which,” says the worthy man, “I was greatly grieved.”

The third Mrs. Balwhidder does not enter so much into the chronicle. But that argues well-being, for, as in the case of a nation, that marriage also is most blessed that has no history. Indeed, the second Mrs. Balwhidder had so well provided the things necessary for this life,

that all the happy couple had to do was to enter into her providing, and in the evening of life enjoy the happiness of each other's society.

Galt's *Lady Macadam* is also one of the finest studies in the book, full of brightness and distinction, with a fine flavour of good-breeding, self-will, and hatred of all Whiggery. The chapter which describes the amusements of the *Lady Macadam*, is bright with all Galt's best qualities. It has that humour which is beyond wit, the shrewd insight, the kindly point of view, the quipsome, couthy homeliness of phrase, which endear John Galt to us. I can indeed understand some people not liking John Galt; but, all the same, I am most mortally sorry for them.

Certainly no such picture of the life of Scotland during the closing years of last century has even been written. So that the place of John Galt in Scottish literature, though not a supreme one, is at least a perfectly well assured one. He may be forgotten, but he will be remembered again. His books may creep up the shelves till they stand a-tiptoe on

the highest and dustiest ledge among the "dear and the dumpy twelves." But assuredly a time will come when they will be taken down again. For he does what no other can do so well. He shows us with vivid directness and reality what like were the quiet lives of leal folk, burghers and ministers and country lairds, a hundred years ago. He makes us fall in love with their simple (but not short) annals, and causes our over-selfish hearts to beat in unison with the pleasures and heartbreaks of men and women who for a century and more have lain asleep in the quiet places of the land.

S. R. CROCKETT.





MEMOIR



## MEMOIR

JOHN GALT was born at Irvine, in Ayrshire, on May 2, 1779. His father was the master of a West Indiaman : one of the best as he was one of the handsomest men, eminent for his probity, of an easy nature, and with only passable ability. That is the portrait of him left by his son, upon whom, we are to suppose, his influence was not marked. Galt's mother, on the other hand, was a strong force evidently. Dr Moir, "Delta," who has written the most intimate and agreeable of the biographies of the author, knew her well, and endorses her son's description of her as "a very singular person, possessing a masculine strength of character, with great natural humour, and a keen relish of the ridiculous in others." These are Galt's own qualities ; and his works discover also the habit of queer metaphorical expression, bordering on the fantastical, and the

command of incomparable Scottish phraseology, which he records as having been hers.

When Galt was ten, the family left Irvine and went to reside at Greenock. It is usual, indeed, to speak of him as a Greenock man: "a broad, gawsy Greenock man," says Carlyle, and, again, "has the air of a sedate Greenock burgher;" and in her *Recollections* Mrs Katherine Thomson speaks of him as being a noted conversationalist, the sweetness of whose tones was marred by a Greenock accent. At Irvine and at Greenock he received impressions which never slackened their hold upon his mind. It was at Irvine, and during his early years, that the sect of the Buchanites was established upon the expositions of a Mrs Buchan in the vain ear of the Relief minister, Mr White. Galt confesses that he never had the slightest knowledge of the doctrine of the heretics; but the manner of their worship, which raised the corruption (as Micah Balwhidder would say) of the populace to the mobbing of Mr White's house, and the dismissal of the "odious schismatic" from their town, enthralled the child. When Mrs Buchan and her followers were marched forth, singing psalms, and on their way, as they said, to the New Jerusalem,

the boy must accompany them, until his mother, in a state of distraction, pursued and brought him back by the lug and the horn. In describing the Covenanters in *Ringan Gilhaize*, he says, "The scene and more than once the enthusiasm of the psalm-singing have risen on my remembrance;" and the incident and its recollection are mentioned by him to illustrate his gift of memory—"a singular local memory," he calls it—which grew with his years and distinguished him among his friends. In the *Autobiography* several examples of it are recorded, of which the most remarkable is that the "Windy Yule" chapter in the *Provost*, as justly remembered for the vividness of its descriptions as for its finely touched sentiment, is based upon an impression of a storm at sea received by him forty years previously, and, it would seem, when he was not more than eight years of age.

The *Autobiography* discovers a child not very strong—not ill, but with "a sort of 'all-overishness' hanging about him"—and cut off thereby from the hearty exercises of other boys. He had early a taste for flowers and their cultivation. When not engaged with them he was lounging in his bed, which gave him "a kind of literary

predilection," receiving from his ballads and story-books vivid impressions that never left him, or having others still more vivid made upon him by the tales and legends of the old women, models for many such in his novels, whose society he sought in the close behind his grandmother's house. After the removal to Greenock, his improved health, and the increased advantages of the town (in libraries, for example), gave his literary and other predilections greater scope. Behind these there always had been plenty of force. At six he was rhyming couplets upon the death of two larks, and when little older, kneeling down, in an access of enthusiasm over Pope's *Iliad*, to pray that one day he might be endowed with powers to do something similar. He carried the same energy into other pursuits. These were out of the beaten school tracks, along which his ill health and his temperament prevented him making very great progress. For a time it was musical composition and practice upon the flute that held him. Despite the gusto which he brought to the exercise, Galt never became expert upon the flute; yet in one overture he "used to be rather above par, and there was a beautiful movement of

Jomelli in which he thought himself divine." He is complaisantly modest in the same way about his compositions, which included his "Lochnagar," popular to the point of the street-organ when published afterwards to Lord Byron's words. To these exercises were added others exhibiting a mechanical bias: the construction of a pianoforte in a box, an edephusion (whatever that may be), and an Eolian harp, which was allowed to perform in the staircase window when his mother happened to be absent. His zeal in these various enterprises was shared by two friends, evidently of superior intellectual constitution. William Spence was his guide to skill upon the flute, being not only a delicious performer, Galt says, but "a considerable composer, making beautiful sonatas which had as much character as the compositions of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia." This and much more is said by Galt, always kindly and enthusiastic, in the biography of his friend which prefaces Spence's "Essay on Logarithmic Transcendents," edited by Sir John Herschell. The same enthusiastic note is struck about his other and closer friend, Park,—“far more accomplished than any other person I have ever known,

and I do not except Lord Byron when I say so." Park, besides excelling as a linguist, had a fine taste in literature; and it is possible that, but for infirm health, he would have produced something of note. As it was, his rhyming gifts were superior to those of Galt, whose endeavours he seems to have excited by his practice and chastened by his criticism. With these two, Galt spent his Greenock years in a fury of intellectual excitement. Sometimes short visits to Glasgow were made "to see London stars." Sometimes walking tours farther afield were "undertaken earnestly for the acquisition of knowledge:" one "a sort of gipsyan expedition to Loch Lomond;" another, of two weeks' duration, beginning with twenty-five miles to Glasgow before breakfast; another still, through Scott's Border Country, on as far as Durham, where the sight of Mrs Siddons as Lady Macbeth came as reward. Under Park's guidance the studies in languages were pushed forward. The Committee of the Public Library had to be brought to its senses, too, for seeking to purge it of tainted authors,— "an unheard-of proceeding in a Protestant land," by which Galt's wrath "was inflamed prodigiously." Again,—for



the wrath so prodigiously inflamed did not reflect democratic principles,—when the second Revolutionary War broke out, Galt “set about raising a corps of two companies of sharpshooters, or riflemen, the first of the kind raised in the Volunteer force of the kingdom,” whose services were accepted by the Government, apparently after negotiations not unlike those of the “propugnacious spirits” in the *Provost*. All this time there was a monthly society, which read papers, Spence conducting into profound depths; and there were flights, Park leading, into the columns of the *Greenock Advertiser* and the *Edinburgh Magazine*. Such were the leisurely pursuits of Galt’s youth, before he went to London and was launched upon the sea of enterprises where he bore himself so bravely even in shipwreck.

Galt left Greenock when he was about twenty-five; and the thirty-five years of his life that remained were an adverse fight with Fortune. In them, according to his own bibliography, he published sixty volumes, twelve plays in the *New British Theatre*, three pamphlets, and tales and essays, of which there is no account, in various periodicals, publications, and annuals. That is an

extraordinary amount of work to be placed to the credit of any literary life ; and yet his was not a literary life at all. It was during a short period of it only that literature was his profession. His record in commercial and other enterprises was as remarkable for a man of affairs as his literary output was for a man of letters. Scarce one of his works but contains some of his own experiences ; and combined they could not produce a history so full of experience as his. Novels, plays, and travels came from his voluminous—his far too voluminous—pen in the intervals left him by undertakings as large in conception as they. And in Galt's own eyes, undoubtedly, these enterprises were of far more value than his writings. It was his fate in his lifetime to fail in those endeavours upon which he set most store, to win applause where he least sought it ; and posterity has used him even as did his contemporaries. It has forgotten his schemes, and out of the long list of his literary works has remembered some half-a-dozen only which his own judgment had put near the foot. His plays, and the historical novels in which (so 'tis said) he attempted to rival Sir Walter Scott, the works which displayed, as he thought, the

giant imagination that was his chief boast, are made of no account, and those only, comparatively few in number, which embody his observations of the Scotland in which he was born and bred, seem destined to live. He laughed incredibly, it is told, when some one's remark was repeated to him, "that he, like Antæus, was never strong save when he touched mother-earth;" but the remark was true. His mother-earth was Ayrshire, to which, when he left it now, save for one or two flying visits, he returned only to die. Before following his fortunes further, we will do well to seek for more detail in this Ayrshire period of his life that has just been sketched. And not only because it was spent among the Ayrshire folk and the Ayrshire ways, by his picture of which we remember him. In it, too, he discovered a character consistent with the failures and successes of his later years.

Greenock had been his home from ten to twenty-five. "I do not say it was the happiest period of my life," he writes, "although it is recollected as the longest. Something of constraint environed me. I do not recollect any circumstances which should endear the remembrance of Greenock to me." Nevertheless, the

remembrance was endeared. Undoubtedly the spring-time of life spent there was not without sunshine, he says himself. We are not surprised to find the "strongest local attachment" accompanying the "singular local memory;" it is in the nature of things that it should, even although there is no attachment to one's fellow-men, and that was not the case with Galt. He was affectionately attached to his kinsfolk, and loyal, with a ridiculous loyalty even, to his friends. "Much of my good nature towards mankind is assuredly owing to my associates at Greenock," Galt was able to write. "I have met, no doubt, with many more accomplished, but never with better men; nor do I recollect that the slightest shade was ever cast upon any one of them. They had, however, what to me has ever appeared a ludicrous infirmity; namely, a conceit of themselves, above all others of the human race whom I have ever seen. A thousand instances of this weakness come upon my recollections as I live over again in this narrative my youthful days; but let me not be thought to calumniate their hearts." We need not be thought to calumniate Galt in any respect when we say that some such innocent good conceit

of himself seems to have come to him in his residence there. And something of infinitely more importance came to him there : something that he under-estimated in comparison with his experiences abroad of it, just inasmuch and to the same extent as he over-estimated his imaginative over his observing powers. Galt's is an extreme example of the not uncommon case of a man failing to recognise wherein his strength lay, of his being jealous, even, of its recognition by others. Here is how he prefaces his account, in the *Literary Life*, of "those productions which have obtained the greatest share of attention, and in which, it is supposed, 'my great strength lieth'": "It is imagined that I have drawn entirely on my recollection, both for the incidents and characters of my most valuable pictures; and it has been alleged that I have very little recourse to that kind of invention, composition, which constitutes the vitality of art;" and then he proceeds to make little of his intimate nearness to the things he chose to depict, lest it should take away from "that kind of invention which constitutes the vitality of art." It is not necessary to show that he was wrong; that although he never slept

but one night in a manse, and that was then the habitation of a clergyman anything but a Mr Balwhidder, and although he "was brought up in a respectable station which rendered me very unlikely to have after I was ten years old seen much of the life which it is supposed I have most delighted to paint," the *Annals* and the *Provost* were really written in Ayrshire, and the characters in them etched upon his mind by the strong acid of his observation, rather than recalled to it in later years by the action of a "strong local memory."

With this marvellous sensitiveness to accurate and lasting impressions, however, there went an energy of mind as marvellous. We have had proof of it in the account of the pursuits of his youth in Greenock; and we have kept until now one passage from the *Autobiography* which exhibits it most vividly. "I was a sort of a fisher," he writes, "but never distinguished. The scene of my reveries was a considerable stream in the moors behind the mountains above the town. . . . It has since been brought round the shoulder of the hill, and being dammed up, it now by a canal gives to the town a valuable water-power. Among my fishing dreams this



very improvement, in a different manner, was one of the earliest. I brought forth to myself a notable plan,—no other than to tunnel the mountain by the drain and lead it into The Shaws water,—for exactly the same purpose as the canal has been since executed. . . . In the Firth, opposite to Greenock, there is a large sand-bank often dry at low water. When it was proposed to enlarge the harbour it occurred to me that this bank might be converted into land, and I have still a very cheap and feasible plan for gradually doing it, but unfortunately the bank belonged to the Crown, and was too sacred to be improved. . . . In contriving schemes such as these my youth was spent, but they were all of too grand a calibre to obtain any attention, and I doubt if there yet be any one among my contemporaries capable of appreciating their importance.”

Schemes of a calibre too grand for his contemporaries to appreciate,—these are what his mind ever ran upon. The expression itself points to a weakness (for so we must consider it in Galt the novelist at least): a nature at once versatile and ambitious, and observant and reflective, and more stubborn than any.

With this key to his character we will be able to read his life ; and it seems to unlock the secret of his literary work. For in the *Annals* and the *Pro-vost* there is more than observation,—something, as he claims himself, that comes from a certain distance in the limning. From his intimate nearness to the things depicted, he might, with equal wealth of detail, have pictured a stationary burgh and a stationary parish. But this did not content the man of affairs, the traveller, the associate of men and women in all degrees of life, the “philosophic fellow,” as Byron called him, who rejoiced in schemes of a grand calibre, whose instinct was for the heroic, whose very conversations smacked of the melodramatic. And so we have, not one picture of parochial and burgher life, but a series of pictures, setting forth changes and transmutations with an intellectual subtlety not less remarkable than the fineness of their observation. At the same time, these qualities of the man, which gave historical value to his work, account for the lack of distinction which the mass of his writing, like his fishing, displayed. It was one of his favourite maxims, Gillies says, that, bookmaking being at best a kind of lottery chance, he could, by merely keeping the pen in



hand, begin and end a work in less time than a fastidious author would consume in laying his plans and debating how the thing was to be done. He was not essentially an artist. The matter and not the manner of his writings was his chief concern, and possibly he had little concern for his writings at all when there were schemes in hand. Above all, he was not tortured by the sense of form. Yet if we account thus for the oblivion into which most of his writings have sunk, we bring into clearer relief the native genius that produced those which survive.

The manner of his leaving Greenock shows at once the resolution that banked his character and his restlessness under the feeling of "something of constraint." He had passed from the Custom House, where Park also was, into the office of a private firm. In the counting-house, late one evening, there arrived a most abusive letter from a Glasgow merchant—one of a purse-proud crop sown in the first Revolutionary War. On receipt of it Galt's blood boiled, and he determined to have an apology. In the morning, therefore, he set out for Glasgow. Finding there that his man had

gone to Edinburgh, he followed him, sought him out in a hotel, bolted the door upon them, and gave him ten minutes to write an apology, which was done. With this in his pocket he posted back to Glasgow, and on to Irvine,—“in the course of my journey many things came to mind, and instead of going home to Greenock I diverged to Irvine,” is his account of the matter,—from where he announced to his parents and his employer his intention to quit Greenock. He was fixed in his resolution to go to London; and in a month or two, apparently in no very happy frame of mind, he had arrived there with a whole mail of introductory letters.

The delivery of these brought him no good save a curious view of human nature. The realisation that he must depend upon his own exertions,—and they never were slack,—although disheartening for a time, strung him up to sterner endeavour, and after looking about for a little he entered into a copartnery with another youth from the same part of the country as himself. This partner, it turned out, was insolvent, and had floating about many renewed bills, which had been represented to Galt as

paid off. The discovery was one difficult for the young firm to stand up against. Galt, however, set himself to overcome the consequent embarrassments. He retained his partner in the business, and in time even took him back to their former intimacy. In three years, when seemingly the house had weathered the storm, it foundered in the difficulties of a correspondent. Galt now entered upon a mercantile undertaking with his brother Tom. He was induced to do so against his will: "the excitement I had undergone would not be subdued, and I was determined to quit commercial business as soon as I could see my brother established;" and when, in a short time, Tom went off to Honduras, Galt entered himself at Lincoln's Inn, and, to pass the time before being called to the Bar, and to restore his health, made a tour abroad.

This London period—the second epoch, according to Galt's division of his life in the *Autobiography*—lasted from June 1804 to 1809. Worried and driven as he had been in it, Galt had found time for some literary work and study. He had brought up to town with him the manuscript of his *Battle of Largs*,

a poem begotten of his antiquarian researches. This was prepared for press, in the intervals of delivering the introductory letters, and from sheer want of something else to do. Though published anonymously, the secret of the authorship leaked out, and on that account, and on others, it was suppressed immediately after its publication was announced. Soon he was struggling, as he had to struggle all his days, to wring success from undertakings which held none; and most men would have found that sufficient. But in the energy of his mind Galt was a very rare man. There is something almost laughable in his account of the studies in his leisure at this time: "I made myself master very early of the *Lex Mercatoria*. . . . I composed a treatise on the practice of underwriting, as sanctioned by the existing laws and the decisions of tribunals. . . . I composed also a history, to the time of Edward III. inclusive, of the ancient commerce of England, a work of research; and wrote likewise a history of bills of exchange. . . . I derived a competent knowledge of families, their descents and connections, and rare recondite things of heraldry;" and, from stumbling on the inquiries of Filanghieri, the Neapolitan, he "began

to frame a new doctrine" of crimes and punishments. All this study, he tells us, was proof of the ambition with which he was filled—and yet, apparently, the idea that knowledge and research must be clothed upon by something called style, if they are to live, never dawned upon him. When his business enterprises were over, too, he set to work upon a long-cherished scheme for a *Life of Wolsey*. This was not published until later; but previously to his tour abroad he worked on it hard.

Galt was out of England for three years. The course of his journeyings, described at great length in his *Voyages and Travels* and in his *Letters from the Levant*, and unsystematically sketched in the *Autobiography*, has been carefully and pleasantly indicated by his biographer, Dr Moir.—

“On the day of his arrival at Gibraltar, our traveller met with Lord Byron, who was then on that tour with Sir John Cam Hobhouse which has been immortalised in the first and second cantos of *Childe Harold*. An acquaintance was subsequently formed, and the three sailed in the same packet to Sardinia and Malta. . . .

“. . . Having resided for a season in Sicily,

Mr Galt repaired to Malta; and, after touching at the islands of Zante and Patras, paid a visit to Corinth. Proceeding thence to Tripolizza, where he had an interview with the famous Ali Pasha, he bent his course towards Athens, to the Waywode of which place he had received a particular introduction from the Vizier Vilhi. He took up his residence in the Propaganda Fide of Rome Monastery, and Lord Byron chancing to be also at that time in the same city, their acquaintance was renewed. While there Mr Galt's health was very variable, at times obliging him to shut himself entirely up within the walls of his domicile; nor could this solitude otherwise than have hung heavy on his hands, had he not endeavoured to while away ennui by poetical pastimes. One of his effusions he entitled *Il Inconsueto*, being descriptions of scenes in a voyage to Palestine, written in the Spenserian stanza, and another, *The Atheniad*, a mock epic in heroic verse, relating to the Elgin marbles, in which the heathen deities are made to avenge the cause of Minerva. The manuscripts of both were, it seems, shown to the noble poet; and the circumstance is here mentioned for the sake of pointing out the curious coincidence—if nothing



more—that both Galt and Byron should have been, at the same time and in the same place, occupied with similar subjects, and both in the same kinds of verse. Here, however, the parallel ends. The latter was a great poet, which the former was not : Galt's mastery lay in a different line. The *Il Inconsueto* was lost in manuscript ; but *The Atheniad*, which contains many vigorous lines, has been preserved.

“ After leaving Athens, Mr Galt visited Hydra, Zea, and Scios, and thence proceeded by Ephesus to Smyrna. In reference to some commercial scheme connected with the firm of Messrs Struthers, Kennedy, & Co., he obtained possession of a large building on the island of Myconi, which had been originally erected by Count Orloff, the Consul-General of Russia in the reign of Catharine the Second, when that ambitious queen had an eye to the dominion of the Grecian Archipelago. This circumstance, along with the seeming want of any feasible purpose for wandering about, gave rise to the idea that our valetudinarian was a political agent, bent on the furtherance of some secret mission. The allegation was no doubt idle enough, but, when we consider the country and the times, might

have brought down on a suspected head many dangerous consequences.

“Returning again to Athens, he found that his former apartments in the Propaganda Monastery had been taken possession of by Lord Byron; but he was accommodated with others in the same building. Two personages who afterwards attracted great notoriety in the world, although in very different spheres, were also there at this particular time, and, along with the Marquis of Sligo, were unceasing in their kind attentions to our traveller, who continued a great invalid,—the one was the Lady Hester Stanhope, then domiciled among the Moslem; and the other, M. Bruce, who assisted in the escape of La Valette. On leaving the city of the Acropolis, Mr Galt visited Marathon, Thebes, and Chersonæa—sounds which stir the heart like the sound of a trumpet; ascended Parnassus; and, at Delphi, drank at the Castalian spring; wound through the pass of Thermopylæ; looked upon the plain of Pharsalia; and rode, by moonlight, across the vale of Tempe.

“Having crossed the Gulf of Salonica, Mr Galt proceeded to Constantinople, where, after remaining some time, he penetrated into Nico-



media; thence traversing the northern limb of Asia Minor, he at length reached Kirpe, on the shores of the Black Sea. It would appear that his object in taking this little-frequented track was to ascertain the possibility of conveying British goods, with any chance of successful speculation, into particular parts of the Continent, in spite of the interdict pronounced by the Berlin and Milan decrees; and the journey created some feeling of disappointment as to the practicability of the scheme, so far as that particular quarter was concerned; but this was counterbalanced by the advantages which it developed with reference to others. It was therefore arranged that a considerable cargo, amounting to a hundred bales of goods, should be sent to Widdin, whose arrival our traveller was to precede, and to see it deposited there until it could be transmitted to Hungary, by way of Orsova. This journey was attended with many difficulties and dangers, as it was through a region little known, across 'mountains high and deserts idle,' during the winter season, and, moreover, at a time when the Russians and Turks were at war. His enthusiasm was, however, not to be daunted. Leaving Adrianople, he visited Philippi, where

erst the stalwart ghost of Cæsar darkened the tent of Brutus; and hastened on to Sophia, then the headquarters of Vilhi Pasha, who kindly gave him an escort of horsemen across Mount Hæmus.

“ Having remained at Widdin as long as his commercial ties made it necessary or useful, he travelled along ‘the banks of the dark-rolling Danube,’ on his retrograde route to Constantinople, where having arrived, he proceeded homewards by sea. At this time he chanced to remain for several days at Missolonghi, since rendered famous and familiar to British ears as the death-place of Byron. While there, it chanced that the works of Goldoni fell into his hands; and the weather being so wet that he could not stir abroad, he translated, as an amusement, the *La Gelosia di Lindoro*, and another comedy, which, under the name of *Love, Honour, and Interest*, was also published afterwards in the *New British Theatre*. . . .

“ At Messina, to which Mr Galt next voyaged, the crew were put under quarantine for eighteen days. No situation more lugubrious can be imagined. The room assigned to him looked solely into a courtyard, the area of which was used

as a burying-ground. He craved a book, and that brought to him was the *Life and Works of Alfieri*, which he now saw for the first time, and the impression which they made upon him, read under such circumstances, appears to have never been afterwards obliterated. He betook himself to translating select portions, to make himself more familiar with the style and habits of thought of that singular writer ; and he was struck with the feeling that some of his finest natural touches of passion were marred in their effect by the introduction of some recondite and classical, or, in other words, unnatural, expression. To test the truth of this impression, he set about himself composing a series of dramas, founded on the same principles as those of the Italian author, in so far as appertained to simplicity of plot and the number of characters to be introduced, but avoiding, as much as possible, the rocks on which his predecessor appeared, in his judgment, to have made wreck of many of his finest things."

In the end of 1811 Galt was back in London, with his head full of the Levant scheme, and his hands with works for the press. The scheme did not succeed : that is only what the readers of Galt's life expect to hear ; and the negotiations

before it failed have lost their interest. The curious thing is that, although, when he came to write the *Autobiography*, he had not lost his belief in the feasibility of his plans that had gone wrong, he could touch on his enthusiasms so playfully. "I built castles in the air of the most gorgeous description, with a Fame on the pediment blazoning with her trumpet," he wrote of himself and the Levant business. There had been a talk of Government taking up the undertaking and placing him at the head of it, and, in consequence, Galt abandoned the study of law, and with it, for a time, the idea of a literary life. Then, as the outlook in the Levant faded away, for him at any rate, he fell in with a proposal made him by Mr Kirkman Finlay to join a branch which his house intended to establish at Gibraltar. The business—practically it was the smuggling of goods into Spain, then overrun by the French—was not to his British taste, and he should not have undertaken it had not the stress of circumstance begun to tell upon him. Before setting out he sold off his valuable library, collected with the lavishness which he carried into all his pursuits; and he paid a farewell visit to his native place. "The journey," he says,

“was in one respect not pleasant. I found myself prodigiously changed, and I saw many persons altered by time—changed too, I thought, in character. But the great transmutation of which I was sensible was in my own hopes. I remembered well how buoyant, even fantastical, they ever had been, how luxuriant and blossomy; but I saw that a blight had settled on them, and that my career must in future be circumscribed and very sober.” Yet even his circumscribed and sober career in Spain was to be cut short. The victories of the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsula, and his triumphant entry into Madrid, cut the ground from under the Gibraltar house; and once more Galt was cast upon his own resources. True to himself, he set about mastering the Spanish language; and he was not persuaded to declare himself beaten by returning to London until the imperative call of his health for surgical aid forced him to the step.

The slings and arrows of a singularly outrageous fortune were driving Galt fast to literature as a profession; but he made one other effort to escape by way of mercantile endeavour. On the restoration of Louis the Eighteenth, he

crossed to France, and passed from there to Belgium and Holland, on the outlook for inducements to settle in one or other of these countries. He could see none, however, and soon returned to London.

From this time, more or less, until he undertook the management of the Canada Company, with which his name, as a man of affairs, is now generally remembered, he followed literature singly. Since his return from the Mediterranean, however, he had indulged as freely as ever his taste for scribbling down his thoughts, feelings, and observations, and for publishing the result. In preparing for the press his *Voyages and Travels*, originally a series of letters to Park, he was assisted by Dr Tilloch, the editor of the *Philosophic Magazine*, and proprietor of the *Star* newspaper, whose daughter he married now. The *Life of Cardinal Wolsey* was finished, and ultimately ran into three editions; and was followed by a volume of six dramas, ("the worst ever seen," Scott said), which he had begun at Messina in the manner of Alfieri's, the reading of which there had impressed him greatly. These and his *Letters from the Levant* were roughly handled by the critics, who did not



spare the looseness of his style, upon which he put little stress, and the rashness of his judgments, of which they were unable, he says, to see the value—a reflection of the old complaint concerning his Greenock schemes, “They were all of too grand a calibre to obtain any attention, and I doubt if there be any among my contemporaries capable of appreciating their importance.” He was incensed especially at the *Quarterly’s* reviews of his works, determining upon a horse-whipping of Croker, which his marriage happily prevented; and he never forgot or forgave them, having the belief, rightly or wrongly, that the effect of their misrepresentations was to make his position in Canada later, difficult in any case, more difficult still. For a short time, too, he had edited Yorke’s *Political Review*; and by-and-by he had conceived and started another venture, the *New British Theatre*, for which even he himself came to have scarce a good word. Its original title, *The Rejected Theatre*, explains it: it was to give a hearing to rejected dramas; and in the first number Galt made an assault upon the monopoly of the London patent theatres. “I had some experience myself,” he writes naïvely, “respecting

the difficulty of obtaining a candid hearing of a new piece, because, being now more inclined to the quiet cultivation of literature than formerly, I had offered to both theatres the tragedy of *The Witness*, and it was returned to me with a rejection, although the state of the manuscript gave me reason to believe that but the title had been read." *The Witness*, afterwards produced in Edinburgh with some success as *The Appeal*, and at least ten other dramas by Galt, appeared in the *New British Theatre*. After the first number, the publication was a ludicrous failure. "It would absolutely not be within the range of belief to describe the sad efforts of genius which were afterwards sent me," says its founder and editor; "and seeing that by the nature of its contributions it must be a failure, I cut and run." *Majola*, his first novel, was the last work of his amateur pen: "Hitherto I had written only to please myself, and had published more to acquire the reputation of a clever fellow than with the hope of making money; but almost immediately on sending forth the second volume, I saw that hereafter I was destined to eke out my income with my pen,—with the causes the public, according to my opinion, have



nothing to do, and it would be exceedingly impertinent to inquire." For the next ten years the two currents of his energy ran almost entirely in the channel of literature. Its volume was extraordinary. The year of *Majola* saw the first part of the *Life and Studies of Benjamin West*. *The Crusade: a Poem*, *The Wandering Jew*, an abridgment of *Modern Travels in Asia*, two volumes of *Historical Pictures*, and the *Earthquake*, followed.

And now, in 1821, the *Ayrshire Legatees* appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*, and, late in life, Galt came into his own. Some ten years previously, in leisure snatched from those schemes and ventures we have noted, he had written *The Annals of the Parish*. When he offered it to the firm which a little later was to publish *Waverley*, he had it returned to him with the assurance that a novel entirely Scottish would not take with the public. As has been pointed out, it was left to Scott to create a taste and to make a market for work even so original as Galt's. Meanwhile, as the publishers would have none of it, the manuscript of the *Annals* was laid aside, and it was forgotten by its author until the success of the *Legatees*

recalled it to mind. That success was very notable. A paternity not lower than that of *Waverley* was ascribed to it, "Delta" says; and he tells us, too, that scarce had its publication begun in the *Magazine*, when its editor, Mr Blackwood, with his noted sagacity and shrewdness, saw and appreciated Galt's peculiar powers, assisted him by his advice, convinced him where his strength lay, and prevailed on him to go on working the rich original vein which he had opened. "Although the *Annals of the Parish* is much older than the *Ayrshire Legatees*," Galt himself says, "it is due to Mr Blackwood to ascribe to him the peculiarities of that production; for, although unacquainted with the *Annals of the Parish*, his reception of my first contribution to his *Magazine*, of the *Ayrshire Legatees*, encouraged me to proceed with the manner in which it is composed, and thus, if there be any originality in my Scottish class of compositions, he is entitled to be the first person who discovered it." The forgotten manuscript was hunted up, the chronicle of Dalmailing rewritten in accordance with the advice of his publisher, and the reputation founded by the *Ayrshire Legatees* firmly established by

the *Annals of the Parish*. It is not necessary here to make a critical estimate of these books. Mr Crockett has done that in his *Introduction* to this volume, and will perform a similar office for the other novels of the present edition,—*Sir Andrew Wylie*, *The Entail*, *The Provost*, and *The Last of the Lairds*,—works which followed the *Annals* in rapid succession, and have survived with it. To this period of Scottish work belong also one or two more ambitious novels which have not been so fortunate: *Ringan Gilhaize*, a story of the Scottish Covenanters, most likely suggested by *Old Mortality*, and designed to counteract the injustice done them by Scott therein; *The Spaewife*, founded on the life and fortunes of James the First of Scotland, which met with considerable success; and *Rothelan*, hastily concluded by the pressure of the Canadian business.

For although, as a writer, he had now reached the highest point of his fame, his ambition to excel in a more active field was not dead. Just when his adventurous days were over, and he had settled down to enjoy, and to add to, the triumphs of his pen, his restless nature broke bounds once more, and he entered upon the

Canadian undertaking in which his fortunes were wrecked. Between the publication of the *Entail* and of *Rothelan*, he had received letters from Canada appointing him agent for such of the principal inhabitants as had claims to urge for losses sustained during the invasion of the Province by the armies of the United States. Negotiations went forward for some years, Galt's share in them becoming more and more important. He was appointed Secretary of the Canada Company, which sprang out of them, and one of the Commissioners whom the Government was sending out for the valuation of the Province. Difficulties arose between the Colonial Office and the Commissioners, owing to the action of the Canada clergy, and he was one of two arbiters in whose hands the settlement of them was left; and when that had been reached, it became necessary for him to go out to Canada to make arrangements for the Company's operations.

There is no need to dwell upon the misunderstandings and difficulties which hampered him in his work in the Province. He had hints of them before he set sail, and he had scarce landed when they declared themselves plainly. Enemies

had poisoned the ear of the Governor and of the local Government, and Galt's actions seemed to give colour to their tales. The old belief in his capacity to lead came out, the old ambition to lead into great possessions. During a lifetime he had been on the outlook for a field for his schemes of a grand calibre. He had found it at length, it seemed, but still not the contemporaries capable of appreciating their importance. And although we cannot cast all the blame upon the contemporaries, nor even, perhaps, justify throughout Galt's conduct of the schemes, it is impossible not to sympathise with his indignation at the suspicions of the one, and his "tingling at every pore" at the censure passed upon the other.

The Canada Company had originated in his suggestions. It was established by his endeavours; organised, in disregard of many obstacles, by his perseverance; and, though extensive and complicated in its scheme, a system was formed by him upon which it could be conducted with ease. Guelph had been founded—"at the cost of not much more than the publication of a novel." To him it seemed as if "everything he had touched was prosperous: his endeavours to foster

the objects of his care were flourishing, and, without the blight of one single blossom, gave cheering promises of ample fruit." That was his estimate of his work in Canada, and it was endorsed by the settlers themselves; yet troubles and misrepresentations were the return he received. He could not hide his chagrin at all this; yet there was always a high note of manhood in his repinings. "Neither open enmity," he wrote, "nor covert machinations of personal malice, nor the ingenuity of sordid self-interest, can hereafter prevent my humble name from being associated with the legends of undertakings at least as worthy of commemoration as the bloody traditions of heroic lands." Nor have they, or the other forces opposed to him less undeserving of such harsh names.

Back in London, "retired from the arena of business with the sullenness of a vanquished bull," his fortunes shattered, and his health not of the best, he sat down at the desk once more. "I felt my independence augmented," he says, "by looking on poverty, undismayed at her emaciation." It was characteristic of him that he should estimate the income to be made by his pen at £1000 a year, and that he should



write enough to justify the estimate if not to win the sum. In six months he published six volumes : *Lawrie Todd*, a novel based upon the autobiography of a seed merchant in New York whom he had met in his American travels, and affording a picture of life in the backwoods, touched by the poetry and sublimity that comes from contact with nature ; and *Southennan*, another novel in three volumes, embodying scenes and fancies of his youth, and depicting the customs and manners of Scotland in the reign of Queen Mary. In the same year appeared the *Life of Lord Byron*—"that which I regard as the worst paid and the most abused, and yet among the most meritorious, of all my productions." On account of it he was the object of satire and criticism—malicious both, he thought, and added characteristically, "The thing is to me somewhat inexplicable ; for who can say that, either in life or literature, I have ever afforded him reason to complain that I wilfully meant him wrong ?"

It was after the appearance of the Byron volume that he went to live at Barnes Cottage, Old Brompton. While there he published the *Lives of the Players*, an amusing compilation, and

*Bogle Corbet, or the Emigrants* ; wrote much in the magazines, *Fraser's* among others ; and was engaged on some eight other volumes. In the spring of the following year the condition of his health was greatly worse. The affection of the spine became intolerably painful, and something resembling an attack of paralysis was induced. His speech was occasionally indistinct, his handwriting was visibly affected, and for several months he could not walk into his sitting-room without much difficulty.

This was the beginning of the end. The wonderful spring of his nature, indeed, enabled him to go on working and hoping : *Eben Erskine, The Stolen Child, The Stories of the Study, the Autobiography*, and the *Literary Life* were still to come from his pen, and death found him busy with the proof-sheets of a volume of his poems. But the paralytic attacks continued, each one leaving him more shattered than before, and this ill condition of health brought his fortunes to a low ebb. "Nothing can be imagined more melancholy," writes Dr Moir, who attended him as a medical adviser and as a friend, and knew and appreciated him as none of his other biographers have done, "than the situa-



tion to which he found himself at this time reduced. It would have been even a consolation to think that his corporeal infirmities had in some degree blunted the acuteness of his feelings—but this was by no means the case; and all his manifold deprivations were spread out, as on a map, before him. One after another, his three sons had left him, and all were now away from their native land; his life had been one of continued labour and exertion; and, if he had accomplished much for others, little of worldly good had accrued to himself. While yet but at that age which many consider the vigour of life, he was a broken-down and nearly helpless invalid. Of the thousands who had been delighted by his works, how few spared even a thought for their author; and while spreading the seeds of wealth and happiness around a young colony, he had been unceremoniously—shall we say ungenerously?—removed from the sphere of his usefulness. He had been dreaming golden dreams, and awoke to find himself in narrowed circumstances; and, as if in mockery of his forlorn estate, prospects of aggrandisement were held out to him, when natural impossibilities interposed. With all the

eagerness to be useful, he was left alone in his solitary chair—whose only travel was from his bedroom to his parlour,—to think of baffled hopes and abandoned projects; and to feel that his talents, however successfully applied for the advancement of others, had produced but a harvest of chaff for himself. The day of his destiny he knew to be over; yet his sorrow arose not from mere chagrin. If he had looked forward to a more auspicious termination of his labours, he had also indulged in the fond hope of having accomplished more both in thought and action; and though darkened even to the verge of despair as were his surrounding views, his natural energy refused to give way, and every transient gleam of returning health brought along with it a renewal of mental exertion."

From Brompton he went to Edinburgh, to superintend the publication of the *Literary Miscellanies*, which he had received permission to dedicate to William the Fourth. Later, he retired to Greenock, where, after three years of suffering, borne with firmness and patience, he died on April 11, 1839. "A kinder, or less complaining spirit never sank to rest," says one who knew him well.

To this sketch of Galt, the man, let us add some touches by other hands. Dr Moir has drawn him at the time of making his acquaintance, a year or two after the publication of the *Annals*. "He was then in his forty-fourth year, of Herculean frame, and in the full vigour of health. His height might be about six feet one or two, and he evinced a tendency to corpulency. His hair, which was jet black, had not yet become grizzled; his eyes were small but piercing; his nose almost straight; long upper lip, and finely rounded chin. At an early period of life Mr Galt had suffered from smallpox, but the marks of its ravages were by no means severe, and, instead of impairing, lent a peculiar interest to his manly and striking countenance. He was seldom or never seen without spectacles; but we are uncertain whether the use of these arose from natural short-sightedness or from the severity of his studies. In conversation Mr Galt's manner was somewhat measured and solemn, yet full of animation and characterised by a peculiar benignity and sweetness. Except when questioned, he was not particularly communicative, and in mixed company was silent and reserved. His

answers, however, always conveyed the results of a keen and discriminative judgment, and of an eye that allowed not the ongoings of the world to pass unobserved or unimproved. His learning was more of a singular than of a general kind; and on many subjects of book-knowledge he seemed to have struck into the by-ways to avoid the highways; consequently, the results of his reading might be said to have been curious rather than useful. It would be difficult to suppose, from the general tenor of his writings, that he should have been particularly fond of metaphysical or abstract discussions, yet such was remarkably the case in a quiet *tête-à-tête*. In such he abjured with little ceremony the dogmas of the schools; and he treated his subjects with ingenuity and acumen, not according to what was generally received regarding them, but according to what appeared to him to be their nature and bearings. For the sake of eliciting ingenuity in discussion, he often took up what was evidently the more vulnerable side of the argument, and thus acted on the offensive, to draw out the resources of his opponent in debate. In these gladiatorial exercises he uniformly displayed exceeding tact

and address, together with an illustrative invention often quite poetical ; although the arguments, when calmly considered, might be, perhaps, too shadowy and substanceless to convey intellectual satisfaction. . . . His views, even on practical subjects, were often sufficiently speculative and sanguine,—but all indicating a grasp and comprehension of mind, and all tending towards philanthropic conclusions.” Byron, who knew him earlier, had already summed him up as a man, with all his eccentricities, of much good sense and experience of the world,—“a good-natured, philosophic fellow.”

It was at a later period, when he had returned from Canada broken in health and fortune, that Carlyle met him at Fraser’s dinner in Regent Street, with Allan Cunningham, James Hogg, Lockhart, and other contributors. “Galt looks old,” he recorded the impression made at the meeting, “is deafish, had the air of a sedate Greenock burgher ; mouth indicating sly humour and self-satisfaction ; the eyes, old and without lashes, gave me a sort of wae interest for him. He wears spectacles and is hard of hearing ; a very large man, and eats and drinks with a certain West-country gusto and

research. Said little, but that little peaceable, clear and *gutmüthig*." "Old-growing, lovable with pity," is Carlyle's note about him a little later; and very soon came the pathetic condition at Brompton, of which Mrs Thomson writes:—"Day by day might his tall, bent form be seen, aided by servants, entering the City omnibus, as it stood in that hot, dusty road by Barnes Cottage. On he went, to argue and wrangle and press his claims with hard-headed men, and to return disappointed and irritable to his large easy-chair, and to the unmeasured sympathy of the best of women and wives." Yet there never was a man, she tells us, for whom illness did so much in the way of personal improvement. She had known him in the prime of manhood and in the vigour of health, and he was ungainly, with a commonplace though handsome cast of features, a hardness of aspect altogether; and there was nothing of the quiet dignity and gentle deference to others that pleased in his later years. It is she who says that a kinder and less complaining spirit never sank to rest. Gentleness of heart, an unwearied spirit, a dignified bearing in the midst of ill fortune—these we can read

into the personality of Galt, making it, even in the midst of his "ravelled, hither and-thither life," not altogether out of accord with the "melodious and continuous impression of peace," which, as Mr Crockett says, is conveyed by the *Annals of the Parish*.





**ANNALS OF THE PARISH**  
**AND**  
**THE AYRSHIRE LEGATEES**



# ANNALS OF THE PARISH

## INTRODUCTION

IN the same year, and on the same day of the same month, that his Sacred Majesty King George, the third of the name, came to his crown and kingdom, I was placed and settled as the minister of Dalmailing. When about a week thereafter this was known in the parish, it was thought a wonderful thing, and everybody spoke of me and the new king as united in our trusts and temporalities, marvelling how the same should come to pass, and thinking the hand of Providence was in it, and that surely we were pre-ordained to fade and flourish in fellowship together: which has really been the case; for in the same season that his Most Excellent Majesty (as he was very properly styled in the proclamations for the general fasts and thanksgivings) was set by as a precious vessel which had received a crack or a flaw, and

could only be serviceable in the way of an ornament, I was obliged, by reason of age and the growing infirmities of my recollection, to consent to the earnest entreaties of the Session,<sup>1</sup> and to accept of Mr Amos to be my helper. I was long reluctant to do so; but the great respect that my people had for me, and the love that I bore towards them, over and above the sign that was given to me in the removal of the royal candlestick from its place, worked upon my heart and understanding, and I could not stand out. So, on the last Sabbath of the year 1810, I preached my last sermon; and it was a moving discourse. There were few dry eyes in the kirk that day; for I had been with the aged from the beginning, the young considered me as their natural pastor, and my bidding them all farewell was as when of old among the heathen an idol was taken away by the hands of the enemy.

At the close of the worship, and before the blessing, I addressed them in a fatherly manner; and, although the kirk was fuller than ever I saw it before, the fall of a pin might have been heard, and at the conclusion there was a sobbing and much sorrow. I said,

“My dear friends, I have now finished my work among you for ever. I have often spoken to you from this place the words of truth and holiness; and, had it been in poor frail human nature to practise the advice and counselling that I have

<sup>1</sup> Note A. *The Session.*

given in this pulpit to you, there would not need to be any cause for sorrow on this occasion—the close and latter end of my ministry. But, nevertheless, I have no reason to complain; and it will be my duty to testify, in that place where I hope we are all one day to meet again, that I found you a docile and a tractable flock,—far more than at first I could have expected. There are among you still a few, but with grey heads and feeble hands now, that can remember the great opposition that was made to my placing, and the stout part they themselves took in the burly, because I was appointed by the patron;<sup>1</sup> but they have lived to see the error of their way, and to know that preaching is the smallest portion of the duties of a faithful minister. I may not, my dear friends, have applied my talent in the pulpit so effectually as perhaps I might have done, considering the gifts that it pleased God to give me in that way, and the education that I had in the Orthodox University of Glasgow, as it was in the time of my youth; nor can I say that, in the works of peace-making and charity, I have done all that I should have done. But I have done my best, studying no interest but the good that was to rise according to the faith in Christ Jesus.

“To my young friends I would, as a parting word, say: Look to the lives and conversation of your parents. They were plain, honest, and devout Christians, fearing God and honouring the

<sup>1</sup> Note A. *The Patron.*

King. They believed the Bible was the Word of God ; and, when they practised its precepts, they found, by the good that came from them, that it was truly so. They bore in mind the tribulation and persecution of their forefathers for righteousness' sake, and were thankful for the quiet and protection of the government in their day and generation. Their land was tilled with industry, and they ate the bread of carefulness with a contented spirit ; and, verily, they had the reward of well-doing even in this world, for they beheld on all sides the blessing of God upon the nation, and the tree growing and the plough going where the banner of the oppressor was planted of old and the war-horse trampled in the blood of martyrs. Reflect on this, my young friends, and know that the best part of a Christian's duty in this world of much evil is to thole<sup>1</sup> and suffer with resignation, as long as it is possible for human nature to do. I do not counsel passive obedience : that is a doctrine that the Church of Scotland can never abide ; but the divine right of resistance, which, in the days of her trouble, she so bravely asserted against popish and prelatic usurpations, was never resorted to till the attempt was made to remove the ark of the tabernacle from her. I therefore counsel you, my young friends, not to lend your ears to those that trumpet forth their hypothetical politics ; but to believe that the laws of the land are administered with a good intent, till in your

<sup>1</sup> *To thole.* To endure.

own homes and dwellings ye feel the presence of the oppressor. Then, and not till then, are ye free to gird your loins for battle ; and woe to him, and woe to the land where that is come to, if the sword be sheathed till the wrong be redressed !

“ As for you, my old companions, many changes have we seen in our day ; but the change that we ourselves are soon to undergo will be the greatest of all. We have seen our bairns grow to manhood ; we have seen the beauty of youth pass away ; we have felt our backs become unable for the burthen, and our right hand forget its cunning. Our eyes have become dim and our heads grey, we are now tottering with short and feckless<sup>1</sup> steps towards the grave ; and some that should have been here this day are bed-rid, lying, as it were, at the gates of death, like Lazarus at the threshold of the rich man’s door, full of ails and sores, and having no enjoyment but in the hope that is in hereafter. What can I say to you but farewell ! Our work is done, we are weary and worn-out and in need of rest : may the rest of the blessed be our portion, and in the sleep that all must sleep, beneath the cold blanket of the kirkyard grass, and on that clay pillow where we must shortly lay our heads, may we have pleasant dreams, till we are awakened to partake of the everlasting banquet of the saints in glory ! ”

When I had finished, there was for some time a great solemnity throughout the kirk ; and, before

<sup>1</sup> *Feckless.* Feeble.

giving the blessing, I sat down to compose myself, for my heart was big, and my spirit oppressed with sadness.

As I left the pulpit, all the elders stood on the steps to hand me down, and the tear was in every eye, and they helped me into the session-house; but I could not speak to them, nor they to me. Then Mr Dalziel, who was always a composed and sedate man, said a few words of prayer, and I was comforted therewith, and rose to go home to the manse; but in the churchyard all the congregation was assembled, young and old, and they made a lane for me to the back-yett<sup>1</sup> that opened into the manse-garden. Some of them put out their hands and touched me as I passed, followed by the elders, and some of them wept. It was as if I was passing away, and to be no more. Verily, it was the reward of my ministry, a faithful account of which, year by year, I now sit down, in the evening of my days, to make up, to the end that I may bear witness to the work of a beneficent Providence, even in the narrow sphere of my parish, and the concerns of that flock of which it was His most gracious pleasure to make me the unworthy shepherd.

<sup>1</sup> *Yett. Gate.*



## CHAPTER I

YEAR 1760

*The placing of Mr Balwhidder—The resistance of the parishioners—Mrs Malcolm, the widow—Mr Balwhidder's marriage.*

THE An. Dom. one thousand seven hundred and sixty, was remarkable for three things in the parish of Dalmailing. First and foremost, there was my placing; then, the coming of Mrs Malcolm with her five children to settle among us; and next, my marriage upon my own cousin, Miss Betty Lanshaw:—by which the account of this year naturally divides itself into three heads or portions.

First, of the placing. It was a great affair; for I was put in by the patron, and the people knew nothing whatsoever of me, and their hearts were stirred into strife on the occasion, and they did all that lay within the compass of their power to keep me out, insomuch that there was obliged to be a guard of soldiers to protect the presbytery;<sup>1</sup> and it was a thing that made my heart grieve when I heard the drum beating and the fife playing

<sup>1</sup> Note A. *The Patron.*

as we were going to the kirk. The people were really mad and vicious, and flung dirt upon us as we passed, and reviled us all, and held out the finger of scorn at me; but I endured it with a resigned spirit, compassionating their wilfulness and blindness. Poor old Mr Kilfuddy of the Braehill got such a clash of glar<sup>1</sup> on the side of his face that his eye was almost extinguished.

When we got to the kirk door it was found to be nailed up, so as by no possibility to be opened. The sergeant of the soldiers wanted to break it; but I was afraid that the heritors would grudge and complain of the expense of a new door, and I supplicated him to let it be as it was. We were, therefore, obligated to go in by a window, and the crowd followed us in the most unreverent manner, making the Lord's house like an inn on a fair day with their grievous yellyhooing. During the time of the psalm and the sermon they behaved themselves better; but when the induction came on their clamour was dreadful, and Thomas Thorl, the weaver, a pious zealot in that time, got up and protested, and said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." And I thought I would have a hard and sore time of it with such an outstrapolous people. Mr Given, that was then the minister of Lugton, was a jocose man, and would have his joke even at a solemnity. When

<sup>1</sup> *Clash of glar.* Lump of mud.

the laying of the hands upon me was adoin, he could not get near enough to put on his, but he stretched out his staff and touched my head, and said, to the great diversion of the rest, "This will do well enough: timber to timber;" but it was an unfriendly saying of Mr Given, considering the time and the place, and the temper of my people.

After the ceremony, we then got out at the window, and it was a heavy day to me; but we went to the manse, and there we had an excellent dinner, which Mrs Watts of the new inns of Irville prepared at my request and sent her chaise-driver to serve (for he was likewise her waiter, she having then but one chaise, and that no often called for).

But, although my people received me in this unruly manner, I was resolved to cultivate civility among them, and, therefore, the very next morning I began a round of visitations; but, oh! it was a steep brae that I had to climb, and it needed a stout heart. For I found the doors in some places barred against me; in others, the bairns, when they saw me coming, ran crying to their mothers, "Here's the feckless Mess-John!" and then, when I went into the houses, their parents wouldna ask me to sit down, but with a scornful way said, "Honest man, what's your pleasure here?" Nevertheless, I walked about from door to door like a dejected beggar, till I got the almous<sup>1</sup> deed of a civil reception,—and (who

<sup>1</sup> *Almous.* Charitable.

would have thought it?) from no less a person than the same Thomas Thorl that was so bitter against me in the kirk on the foregoing day.

Thomas was standing at the door with his green duffle<sup>1</sup> apron, and his red Kilmarnock nightcap,—I mind him as well as if it was but yesterday,—and he had seen me going from house to house, and in what manner I was rejected; and his bowels were moved, and he said to me in a kind manner,

“Come in, sir, and ease yoursel’: this will never do: the clergy are God’s gorbies,<sup>2</sup> and for their Master’s sake it behoves us to respect them. There was no ane in the whole parish mair against you than mysel’; but this early visitation is a symptom of grace that I couldna have expectit from a bird out the nest of patronage.”

I thanked Thomas, and went in with him, and we had some solid conversation together. I told him that it was not so much the pastor’s duty to feed the flock as to herd them well; and that, although there might be some abler with the head than me, there wasna a he<sup>3</sup> within the bounds of Scotland more willing to watch the fold by night and by day. And Thomas said he had not heard a mair sound observe for some time, and that, if I held to that doctrine in the poopit, it wouldna be lang till I would work a change.

“I was mindit,” quoth he, “never to set my

<sup>1</sup> *Duffle*. A coarse woollen cloth with a thick nap.

<sup>2</sup> *Gorbies*. Ravens.

<sup>3</sup> *A he*. O ne.

foot within the kirk door while you were there; but, to testify, and no to condemn without a trial, I'll be there next Lord's day, and egg<sup>1</sup> my neighbours to be likewise: so ye'll no have to preach just to the bare walls and the laird's family."

I have now to speak of the coming of Mrs Malcolm. She was the widow of a Clyde ship-master that was lost at sea with his vessel. She was a genty<sup>2</sup> body, calm and methodical. From morning to night she sat at her wheel, spinning the finest lint, which suited well with her pale hands. She never changed her widow's weeds, and she was aye as if she had just been ta'en out of a bandbox. The tear was aften in her e'e when the bairns were at the school; but when they came home her spirit was lighted up with gladness, although, poor woman, she had many a time very little to give them. They were, however, wonderful well-bred things, and took with thankfulness whatever she set before them; for they knew that their father, the breadwinner, was away, and that she had to work sore for their bit and drap.<sup>3</sup> I dare say, the only vexation that ever she had from any of them, on their own account, was when Charlie, the eldest laddie, had won fourpence at pitch-and-toss at the school, which he brought home with a proud heart to his mother. I happened to be daunrin'<sup>4</sup> by at

<sup>1</sup> *Egg*. Urge.

<sup>2</sup> *Genty*. Neat, elegant.

<sup>3</sup> *Bit and drap*. Bite and sup.

<sup>4</sup> *Daunrin'*. Sauntering.

the time, and just looked in at the door to say gude-night: it was a sad sight. There was she sitting with the silent tear on her cheek, and Charlie greeting as if he had done a great fault, and the other four looking on with sorrowful faces. Never, I am sure, did Charlie Malcolm gamble after that night.

I often wondered what brought Mrs Malcolm to our clachan instead of going to a populous town, where she might have taken up a huxtry-shop (as she was but of a silly<sup>1</sup> constitution), the which would have been better for her than spinning from morning to far in the night, as if she was in verity drawing the thread of life. But it was, no doubt, from an honest pride to hide her poverty; for when her daughter Effie was ill with the measles,—the poor lassie was very ill: nobody thought she could come through, and when she did get the turn, she was for many a day a heavy handful,—our Session<sup>2</sup> being rich, and nobody on it but cripple Tammy Daidles, that was at that time known through all the country side for begging on a horse, I thought it my duty to call upon Mrs Malcolm in a sympathising way, and offer her some assistance. But she refused it.

“No, sir,” said she, “I canna take help from the poor’s-box, although it’s very true that I am in great need; for it might hereafter be cast up to my bairns, whom it may please God to restore

<sup>1</sup> Silly. Frail.

<sup>2</sup> Note A. *The Session and the Poor.*



to better circumstances when I am no to see't; but I would fain borrow five pounds, and if, sir, you will write to Mr Maitland, that is now the Lord Provost of Glasgow, and tell him that Marion Shaw would be obliged to him for the lend of that soom, I think he will not fail to send it."

I wrote the letter that night to Provost Maitland, and, by the retour of the post, I got an answer (with twenty pounds for Mrs Malcolm), saying, "That it was with sorrow he heard so small a trifle could be serviceable." When I took the letter and the money, which was in a bank-bill, she said, "This is just like himsel'." She then told me that Mr Maitland had been a gentleman's son of the east country, but driven out of his father's house, when a laddie, by his stepmother; and that he had served as a servant lad with her father, who was the Laird of Yillcogie, but ran through his estate, and left her, his only daughter, in little better than beggary with her auntie, the mother of Captain Malcolm, her husband that was. Provost Maitland in his servitude had ta'en a notion of her, and when he recovered his patrimony, and had become a great Glasgow merchant, on hearing how she was left by her father, he offered to marry her; but she had promised herself to her cousin the captain, whose widow she was. He then married a rich lady, and in time grew (as he was) Lord Provost of the city; but his letter with the twenty pounds

to me showed that he had not forgotten his first love. It was a short, but a well-written, letter, in a fair hand of write, containing much of the true gentleman; and Mrs Malcolm said, "Who knows but, out of the regard he once had for their mother, he may do something for my five helpless orphans?"

Thirdly. Upon the subject of taking my cousin, Miss Betty Lanshaw, for my first wife, I have little to say. It was more out of a compassionate habitual affection than the passion of love. We were brought up by our grandmother in the same house, and it was a thing spoken of from the beginning that Betty and me were to be married. So, when she heard that the Laird of Breadland had given me the presentation of Dalmailing, she began to prepare for the wedding; and as soon as the placing was well over, and the manse in order, I gaed to Ayr, where she was, and we were quietly married, and came home in a chaise, bringing with us her little brother Andrew, that died in the East Indies. And he lived and was brought up by us.

Now, this is all, I think, that happened in that year worthy of being mentioned, except that at the sacrament, when old Mr Kilfuddy was preaching in the tent, it came on such a thunder-plump that there was not a single soul stayed in the kirk-yard to hear him; for the which he was greatly mortified, and never after came to our preachings.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Note A. *Communion Services.*



## CHAPTER II

YEAR 1761

*The great increase of smuggling—Mr Balwhidder disperses a tea-drinking party of gossips—He records the virtues of Nanse Banks, the schoolmistress—The servant of a military man, who had been prisoner in France, comes into the parish, and opens a dancing-school.*

IT was in this year that the great smuggling trade<sup>1</sup> corrupted all the west coast, especially the laigh<sup>2</sup> lands about the Troon and the Loans. The tea was going like the chaff, the brandy like well-water; and the wastrie of all things was terrible. There was nothing minded but the riding of cadgers by day and excisemen by night, and battles between the smugglers and the king's men, by both sea and land. There was a continual drunkenness and debauchery; and our Session, that was but on the lip of this whirlpool of iniquity, had an awful time o't. I did all that was in the power of nature to keep my people from the contagion: I preached sixteen times

<sup>1</sup> Note B.

<sup>2</sup> *Laigh lands.* Low-lying.

from the text, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;" I visited and I exhorted; I warned and I prophesied; I told them that, although the money came in like sclate<sup>1</sup> stones, it would go like the snow off the dyke. But, for all I could do, the evil got in among us, and we had no less than three contested bastard bairns upon our hands at one time, which was a thing never heard of in a parish of the shire of Ayr since the Reformation. Two of the bairns, after no small sifting and searching, we got fathered at last; but the third, that was by Meg Glaiks, and given to one Rab Rickerton, was utterly refused, though the fact was not denied. He was a termagant fellow, and snappit his fingers at the elders. The next day he listed in the Scotch Greys, who were then quartered at Ayr, and we never heard more of him, but thought he had been slain in battle, till one of the parish, about three years since, went up to London to lift a legacy from a cousin that died among the Hindoos. When he was walking about, seeing the curiosities, and among others Chelsea Hospital, he happened to speak to some of the invalids, who found out from his tongue that he was a Scotchman; and speaking to the invalids, one of them, a very old man, with a grey head and a leg of timber, inquired what part of Scotland he was come from. When he mentioned my parish, the invalid gave a great shout, and said he was from the same place him-

<sup>1</sup> *Sclate.* Slate.

self; and who should this old man be but the very identical Rab Rickerton that was art and part in Meg Glaiks' disowned bairn. Then they had a long converse together. He had come through many hardships, but had turned out a good soldier, and so, in his old days, was an indoor pensioner, and very comfortable; and he said that he had, to be sure, spent his youth in the devil's service, and his manhood in the king's, but his old age was given to that of his Maker,—which I was blithe and thankful to hear. And he inquired about many a one in the parish, the blooming and the green of his time, but they were all dead and buried; and he had a contrite and penitent spirit, and read his Bible every day, delighting most in the Book of Joshua, the Chronicles, and the Kings.

Before this year, the drinking of tea was little known in the parish, saving among a few of the heritors' houses on a Sabbath evening; but now it became very rife. Yet the commoner sort did not like to let it be known that they were taking to the new luxury,—especially the elderly women, who, for that reason, had their ploys<sup>1</sup> in out-houses and by-places, just as the witches lang syne had their sinful possets and galravitchings;<sup>2</sup>—and they made their tea for common in the pint-stoup, and drank it out of caps and luggies,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ploys*. Junkets.

<sup>2</sup> *Galravitchings*. Noisy ongoing.

<sup>3</sup> *Caps and luggies*. Both words signify wooden bowls. Caps, however, were turned out of the solid, while luggies were built up of staves, and hooped, and had handles.

for there were but few among them that had cups and saucers. Well do I remember that, one night in harvest, in this very year, as I was taking my twilight dauner aneath the hedge along the back side of Thomas Thorl's yard, meditating on the goodness of Providence, and looking at the sheaves of victual on the field, I heard his wife, and two three other carlins,<sup>1</sup> with their Bohea in the inside of the hedge; and no doubt but it had a lacing of the coneck,<sup>2</sup> for they were all cracking like pen-guns. But I gave them a sign, by a loud host,<sup>3</sup> that Providence sees all, and it skailed the bike;<sup>4</sup> for I heard them, like guilty creatures, whispering, and gathering up their truck-pots and trenchers, and cowering away home.

It was in this year that Patrick Dilworth, (he had been schoolmaster of the parish from the time, as his wife said, of Anna Regina, and before the Rexes came to the crown), was disabled by a paralytic, and the heritors, grudging the cost of another schoolmaster<sup>5</sup> as long as he lived, would not allow the Session to get his place supplied,—which was a wrong thing, I must say, of them; for the children of the parishioners were obliged, therefore, to go to the neighbouring towns for their schooling, and the custom was to take a piece of bread and cheese in their pockets for

<sup>1</sup> *Carlins.* Old women.

<sup>2</sup> *Coneck.* Cognac.

<sup>3</sup> *Host.* Cough.

<sup>4</sup> *Skailed the bike.* Broke up the gathering.

<sup>5</sup> Note A. *The Session and Education.*

dinner, and to return in the evening always voracious for more, the long walk helping the natural crave of their young appetites. In this way Mrs Malcolm's two eldest laddies, Charlie and Robert, were wont to go to Irville, and it was soon seen that they kept themselves aloof from the other callans in the clachan, and had a genteeler turn than the grulshy<sup>1</sup> bairns of the cottars. Her bit lassies, Kate and Effie, were better off; for, some years before, Nanse Banks had taken up a teaching in a garret-room of a house, at the corner where John Bayne has biggit the sclate-house<sup>2</sup> for his grocery-shop. Nanse learnt them reading and working stockings, and how to sew the semplar, for twal-pennies a week. She was a patient creature, well cut out for her calling, with blear een, a pale face, and a long neck, but meek and contented withal, tholing the dule<sup>3</sup> of this world with a Christian submission of the spirit; and her garret-room was a cordial of cleanliness, for she made the scholars set the house in order, time and time about, every morning; and it was a common remark, for many a day, that the lassies who had been at Nanse Banks's school were always well spoken of, for both their civility and the trigness<sup>4</sup> of their houses, when they were afterwards married. In short, I do not know that

<sup>1</sup> *Grulshy*. Coarsely-grown.

<sup>2</sup> *Biggit the sclate-house*. Built the house with the slate roof.

<sup>3</sup> *Tholing the dule*. Enduring the sorrows.

<sup>4</sup> *Trigness*. Orderliness.

in all the long epoch of my ministry any individual body did more to improve the ways of the parishioners, in their domestic concerns, than did that worthy and innocent creature, Nanse Banks, the schoolmistress ; and she was a great loss when she was removed, as it is to be hoped, to a better world. But anent this I shall have to speak more at large hereafter.

It was in this year that my patron, the Laird of Breadland, departed this life, and I preached his funeral sermon ; but he was non-beloved in the parish, for my people never forgave him for putting me upon them, although they began to be more on a familiar footing with myself. This was partly owing to my first wife, Betty Lanshaw, who was an active, throughgoing woman, and wonderfu' useful to many of the cottars' wives at their lying in. When a death happened among them, her helping hand, and anything we had at the manse, were never wanting ; and I went about myself to the bedside of the frail, leaving no stone unturned to win the affections of my people, which, by the blessing of the Lord, in process of time, was brought to a bearing.

But a thing happened in this year which deserves to be recorded, as manifesting what effect the smuggling was beginning to take in the morals of the country side. One Mr Macskipnish (of Highland parentage, who had been a valet-de-chambre with a major in the campaigns, and taken a prisoner with him by the French), having



come home in a cartel,<sup>1</sup> took up a dancing-school at Irville, the which art he had learnt in the genteelest fashion, in the mode of Paris, at the French court. Such a thing as a dancing-school had never, in the memory of man, been known in our country side; and there was such a sound about the steps and cotillions of Mr Macskipnish that every lad and lass that could spare time and siller went to him, to the great neglect of their work. The very bairns on the loan, instead of their wonted play, gaed linking and louping<sup>2</sup> in the steps of Mr Macskipnish, who was, to be sure, a great curiosity, with long spindle legs, his breast shot out like a duck's, and his head powdered and frizzled up like a tappit-hen.<sup>3</sup> He was, indeed, the proudest peacock that could be seen; and he had a ring on his finger; and when he came to drink his tea at the Breadland, he brought no hat on his head, but a droll cockit thing under his arm, which, he said, was after the manner of the courtiers at the petty suppers of one Madam Pompadour, who was at that time the concubine of the French king.

I do not recollect any other remarkable thing that happened in this year. The harvest was very abundant, and the meal so cheap that it caused a great defect in my stipend; so that I was obligated to postpone the purchase of a mahogany

<sup>1</sup> *Cartel*. A ship employed in the exchange of prisoners.

<sup>2</sup> *Linking and louping*. Tripping and leaping.

<sup>3</sup> *Tappit-hen*. A hen with a tuft on her head.

scrutoire for my study, as I had intended. But I had not the heart to complain of this: on the contrary, I rejoiced thereat; for what made me want my scrutoire till another year had carried blitheness into the hearth of the cottar, and made the widow's heart sing with joy; and I should have been an unnatural creature had I not joined in the universal gladness because plenty did abound.



## CHAPTER III

YEAR 1762

*Havoc produced by the smallpox—Charles Malcolm is sent off a cabin-boy, on a voyage to Virginia—Mizy Spaenell dies on Hallowe'en—Tea begins to be admitted at the manse, but the minister continues to exert his authority against smuggling.*

THE third year of my ministry was long held in remembrance for several very memorable things. William Byres of the Loanhead had a cow that calved two calves at one calving; Mrs Byres, the same year, had twins, male and female; and there was such a crop on his fields as testified that the Lord never sends a mouth into the world without providing meat for it. But what was thought a very daunting sign of something happened on the Sacrament Sabbath, at the conclusion of the action sermon,<sup>1</sup> when I had made a very suitable discourse. The day was tempestuous, and the wind blew with such a pith and birr that I thought it would have twirled the trees in

<sup>1</sup> Note A. *Communion Services.*

the kirkyard out by the roots, and, blowing in this manner, it tirlled the thack from the rigging<sup>1</sup> of the manse stable; and the same blast that did that took down the lead that was on the kirk-roof, which hurled off, as I was saying, at the conclusion of the action sermon, with a dreadful sound of which the like was never heard, and all the congregation thought that it betokened a mutation to me. However, nothing particular happened to me; but the smallpox came in among the weans of the parish, and the smashing that it made of the poor bits o' bairns was indeed woeful.

One Sabbath, when the pestilence was raging, I preached a sermon about Rachel weeping for her children, which Thomas Thorl, who was surely a great judge of good preaching, said "was a monument of divinity whilk searched the heart of many a parent that day:" a thing I was well pleased to hear, for Thomas, as I have related at length, was the most zealous champion against my getting the parish. From this time, I set him down in my mind for the next vacancy among the elders. Worthy man! it was not permitted him to arrive at that honour. In the fall of that year he took an income<sup>2</sup> in his legs, and couldna go about, and was laid up for the remainder of his days, a perfect Lazarus, by the fireside. But he was well supported in his affliction. In due

<sup>1</sup> *Tirlled the thack from the rigging.* Stripped the thatch from the roof.

<sup>2</sup> *Income.* Abscess.

season, when it pleased HIM, who alone can give and take, to pluck him from this life, as the fruit ripened and ready for the gathering, his death, to all that knew him, was a gentle dispensation, for truly he had been in sore trouble.

It was in this year that Charlie Malcolm, Mrs Malcolm's eldest son, was sent to be a cabin-boy in the Tobacco trader, a three-masted ship that sailed between Port-Glasgow and Virginia in America. She was commanded by Captain Dickie, —an Irville man; for at that time the Clyde was supplied with the best sailors from our coast, the coal-trade with Ireland being a better trade for bringing up good mariners than the long voyages in the open sea; which was the reason, as I often heard said, why the Clyde shipping got so many of their men from our country side. The going to sea of Charlie Malcolm was, on divers accounts, a very remarkable thing to us all; for he was the first that ever went from our parish, in the memory of man, to be a sailor, and everybody was concerned at it, and some thought it was a great venture of his mother to let him, his father having been lost at sea. But what could the forlorn widow do? She had five weans, and little to give them; and, as she herself said, he was aye in the hand of his Maker, go where he might, and the will of God would be done, in spite of all earthly wiles and devices to the contrary.

On the Monday morning, when Charlie was to go away to meet the Irville carrier on the road

we were all up, and I walked by myself from the manse into the clachan<sup>1</sup> to bid him farewell. I met him just coming from his mother's door, as blithe as a bee, in his sailor's dress, with a stick, and a bundle tied in a Barcelona silk handkerchief hanging o'er his shoulder, and his two little brothers were with him, and his sisters, Kate and Effie, looking out from the door, all begreeten;<sup>2</sup> but his mother was in the house, praying to the Lord to protect her orphan, as she afterwards told me. All the weans of the clachan were gathered at the kirkyard yett to see him pass, and they gave him three great shouts as he was going by; and everybody was at their doors, and said something encouraging to him. And there was a great laugh when auld Mizy Spaewell came hirpling with her bauchle<sup>3</sup> in her hand, and flung it after him for good-luck. Mizy had a wonderful faith in freats,<sup>4</sup> and was just an oracle of sagacity at expounding dreams, and bodes of every sort and description, besides being reckoned one of the best howdies<sup>5</sup> in her day; but by this time she was grown frail and feckless, and she died the same year on Hallowe'en, which made everybody wonder that it should have so fallen out for her to die on Hallowe'en.

<sup>1</sup> *Clachan.* A village lying round a church.

<sup>2</sup> *All begreeten.* With their faces showing the marks of weeping.

<sup>3</sup> *Hirpling with her bauchle.* Walking crazily with her old shoe.

<sup>4</sup> *Freats.* Superstitious practices of all kinds.

<sup>5</sup> *Howdies.* Midwives.

Shortly after the departure of Charlie Malcolm, the Lady of Breadland, with her three daughters, removed to Edinburgh, where the young laird, that had been my pupil, was learning to be an advocate. The Breadland-house was set<sup>1</sup> to Major Gilchrist, a nabob from India; but he was a narrow,<sup>2</sup> ailing man, and his maiden-sister, Miss Girzie, was the scrimpetest<sup>2</sup> creature that could be: so that, in their hands, all the pretty policy<sup>3</sup> of the Breadlands, that had cost a power of money to the old laird that was my patron, fell into decay and disorder; and the bonny yew-trees that were cut into the shape of peacocks soon grew out of all shape, and are now doleful monuments of the Major's tack and that of Lady Skimmilk, as Miss Girzie Gilchrist, his sister, was nicknamed by every ane that kent her.

But it was not so much on account of the neglect of the Breadland that the incoming of Major Gilchrist was to be deplored. The old men that had a light labour in keeping the policy in order were thrown out of bread, and could do little; and the poor women that whiles got a bit and a drap from the kitchen of the family soon felt the change: so that by little and little we were obligated to give help from the Session; insomuch that, before the end of the year, I was

<sup>1</sup> A property is "set to" one when it is let to him on a lease; and the lease is known as the "tack."

<sup>2</sup> *Narrow . . . Scrimpetest.* Both words refer to a closeness (a "nearness") in money matters.

<sup>3</sup> *Policy.* Pleasure grounds round the mansion.

necessitated to preach a discourse on almsgiving, specially for the benefit of our own poor, a thing never before known in the parish.

But one good thing came from the Gilchrists to Mrs Malcolm. Miss Girzie, whom they called Lady Skimmilk, had been in a very penurious way as a seamstress, in the Gorbals of Glasgow, while her brother was making the fortune in India, and she was a clever needle-woman,—none better, as it was said—; and she, having some things to make, took Kate Malcolm to help her in the coarse work, and Kate, being a nimble and birky<sup>1</sup> thing, was so useful to the lady, and to the complaining man the major, that they invited her to stay with them at the Breadland for the winter. There, although she was holden to her seam from morning to night, her foot lightened the hand of her mother, who, for the first time since her coming into the parish, found the penny for the day's darg<sup>2</sup> more than was needed for the meal-basin; and the tea-drinking was beginning to spread more openly, insomuch that, by the advice of the first Mrs Balwhidder, Mrs Malcolm took in tea to sell, and in this way was enabled to eke something to the small profits of her wheel. Thus the tide that had been so long ebbing to her began to turn; and here I am bound in truth to say that, although I never could abide the smuggling, both on its own account, and for the

<sup>1</sup> *Birky*. Sharp, purposeful.

<sup>2</sup> *Day's darg*. The day's portion of work.



evils that grew therefrom to the country side, I lost some of my dislike to the tea after Mrs Malcolm began to traffic in it, and we then had it for our breakfast in the morning at the manse, as well as in the afternoon. But what I thought most of it for was that it did no harm to the head of the drinkers,—which was not always the case with the possets that were in fashion before. There is no meeting now in the summer evenings, as I remember often happened in my younger days, with decent ladies coming home with red faces, tosy and cosh,<sup>1</sup> from a posset-masking. So, both for its temperance and on account of Mrs Malcolm's sale, I refrained from the November in this year to preach against tea; but I never lifted the weight of my displeasure from off the smuggling trade, until it was utterly put down by the strong hand of government.

There was no other thing of note in this year, saving only that I planted in the garden the big pear-tree, which had the two great branches that we call the Adam and Eve. I got the plant, then a sapling, from Mr Graft, that was Lord Eaglesham's head-gardener; and he said it was, as indeed all the parish now knows well, a most juicy, sweet pear, such as was not known in Scotland till my lord brought down the father plant from the king's garden in London, in the forty-five, when he went up to testify his loyalty to the House of Hanover.

<sup>1</sup> *Tosy and cosh.* Slightly intoxicated, and comfortable in their drink.

## CHAPTER IV

YEAR 1763

*Charles Malcolm's return from sea—Kate Malcolm is taken to live with Lady Macadam—Death of the first Mrs Balwhidder.*

THE An. Dom. 1763, was, in many a respect, a memorable year, both in public and in private. The king granted peace to the French, and Charlie Malcolm, who went to sea in the Tobacco trader, came home to see his mother. The ship, after being at America, had gone down to Jamaica, an island in the West Indies, (with a cargo of live lumber, as Charlie told me himself), and had come home with more than a hundred and fifty hoggits of sugar, and sixty-three puncheons full of rum; for she was, by all accounts, a stately galley, and almost two hundred tons in the burthen, being the largest vessel then sailing from the creditable town of Port-Glasgow. Charlie was not expected, and his coming was a great thing to us all; so I will mention the whole particulars.—

One evening, towards the gloaming, as I was taking my walk of meditation, I saw a brisk sailor



laddie coming towards me. He had a pretty green parrot sitting on a bundle, tied in a Barcelona silk handkerchief, which he carried with a stick over his shoulder, and in this bundle was a wonderful big nut, such as no one in our parish had ever seen. It was called a cocker-nut. This blithe callant was Charlie Malcolm, who had come all the way that day his leeful lane,<sup>1</sup> on his own legs, from Greenock, where the Tobacco trader was then 'livering her cargo. I told him how his mother and his brothers and his sisters were all in good health, and went to convoy him home; and, as we were going along, he told me many curious things, and gave me six beautiful yellow limes that he had brought in his pouch, all the way across the seas, for me to make a bowl of punch with, and I thought more of them than if they had been golden guineas,—it was so mindful of the laddie!

When we got to the door of his mother's house, she was sitting at the fireside, with her three other bairns at their bread and milk, Kate being then with Lady Skimmilk, at the Breadland, sewing. It was between the day and dark, when the shuttle stands still till the lamp is lighted. But such a shout of joy and thankfulness as rose from that hearth when Charlie went in! The very parrot, ye would have thought, was a participator: for the beast gied a skraik that made my whole head dirl;<sup>2</sup> and the neighbours came

<sup>1</sup> *His leeful lane.* Lonely and alone.

<sup>2</sup> *Gied a skraik . . . dirl.* Gave a screech . . . vibrate.

flying and flocking to see what was the matter, for it was the first parrot ever seen within the bounds of the parish, and some thought it was but a foreign hawk, with a yellow head and green feathers.

In the midst of all this, Effie Malcolm had run off to the Breadland for her sister Kate, and the two lassies came flying breathless, with Miss Girzie Gilchrist, the Lady Skimmilk, pursuing them like desperation, or a griffin, down the avenue; for Kate, in her hurry, had flung down her seam,—a new printed gown, that she was helping to make,—and it had fallen into a boyne<sup>1</sup> of milk that was ready for the creaming, by which ensued a double misfortune to Miss Girzie, the gown being not only ruined but licking up the cream. For this, poor Kate was not allowed ever to set her face in the Breadland again.

When Charlie Malcolm had stayed about a week with his mother, he returned to his berth in the Tobacco trader, and, shortly after, his brother Robert was likewise sent to serve his time to the sea, with an owner that was master of his own bark, in the coal trade at Irville. Kate, who was really a surprising lassie for her years, was taken off her mother's hands by the old Lady Macadam, who lived in her jointure house, which is now the Cross Keys Inns. Her ladyship was a woman of high breeding, (her husband having been a great general, and knighted by the king for his exploits),

<sup>1</sup> *Boyne*. A broad, flat dish for milk.

but she was lame, and could not move about in her dining-room without help; so, hearing from the first Mrs Balwhidder how Kate had done such an unattonable deed to Miss Girzie Gilchrist, she sent for Kate, and, finding her sharp and apt, took her to live with her as a companion. This was a vast advantage, for the lady was versed in all manner of accomplishments, and could read and speak French with more ease than any professor at that time in the College of Glasgow; and she had learnt to sew flowers on satin, either in a nunnery abroad, or in a boarding-school in England, and took pleasure in teaching Kate all she knew, and how to behave herself like a lady.

In the summer of this year, old Mr Patrick Dilworth, that had so long been doited<sup>1</sup> with the paralytics, died, and it was a great relief to my people, for the heritors could no longer refuse to get a proper schoolmaster.<sup>2</sup> So we took on trial Mr Lorimore, who has, ever since the year after, with so much credit to himself and usefulness to the parish, been schoolmaster, session-clerk, and precentor:—a man of great mildness, and extraordinary particularity. He was then a very young man, and some objection was made, on account of his youth, to his being session-clerk, especially as the smuggling immorality still gave us much trouble in the making up of irregular marriages; but his discretion was greater than could have

<sup>1</sup> *Doited.* Addle-pated.

<sup>2</sup> Note A. *The Session and Education.*

been hoped for from his years, and, after a twelve-month's probation in the capacity of schoolmaster, he was installed in all the offices that had belonged to his predecessor, old Mr Patrick Dilworth that was.

But the most memorable thing that befell among my people this year was the burning of the lint-mill on the Lugton water, which happened, of all the days of the year, on the very self-same day that Miss Girzie Gilchrist, better known as Lady Skimmilk, hired the chaise, from Mrs Watts of the New Inns of Irville, to go with her brother, the major, to consult the faculty in Edinburgh concerning his complaints. For, as the chaise was coming by the mill, William Huckle, the miller that was, came flying out of the mill like a demented man, crying, Fire!—and it was the driver that brought the melancholy tidings to the clachan. And melancholy they were; for the mill was utterly destroyed, and in it not a little of all that year's crop of lint in our parish. The first Mrs Balwhidder lost upwards of twelve stone, which we had raised on the glebe with no small pains, watering it in the drouth, as it was intended for sarking<sup>1</sup> to ourselves, and sheets and napery. A great loss indeed it was, and the vexation thereof had a visible effect on Mrs Balwhidder's health, which from the spring had been in a dwining<sup>2</sup> way. But for it, I think, she might have wrestled through the winter; however, it was ordered

<sup>1</sup> *Sarking*. Shirting.

<sup>2</sup> *Dwining*. Declining.

otherwise, and she was removed from mine to Abraham's bosom on Christmas-day, and buried on Hogmanay, for it was thought uncanny to have a dead corpse in the house on the new-year's day. She was a worthy woman, studying with all her capacity to win the hearts of my people towards me : in the which good work she prospered greatly ; so that, when she died, there was not a single soul in the parish that was not contented with both my walk and conversation. Nothing could be more peaceable than the way we lived together. Her brother Andrew, a fine lad, I had sent to the college at Glasgow, at my own cost. When he came out to the burial he stayed with me a month, for the manse after her decease was very dull. It was during this visit that he gave me an inkling of his wish to go out to India as a cadet ;—but the transactions anent that fall within the scope of another year, as well as what relates to her headstone, and the epitaph in metre, which I indicated myself thereon : John Truel the mason carving the same, as may be seen in the kirkyard, where it wants a little reparation and setting upright, having settled the wrong way when the second Mrs Balwhidder was laid by her side. But I must not here enter upon an anticipation.

## CHAPTER V

YEAR 1764

*He gets a headstone for Mrs Balwhidder, and writes an epitaph for it—He is afflicted with melancholy, and thinks of writing a book—Nichol Snipe's device when reproved in church.*

THIS year well deserved the name of the monumental year in our parish; for the young laird of the Breadland, that had been my pupil, being learning to be an advocate among the faculty in Edinburgh, with his lady mother, who had removed thither with the young ladies her daughters for the benefit of education, sent out, to be put up in the kirk, under the loft over the family vault, an elegant marble headstone, with an epitaph engraven thereon, in fair Latin, setting forth many excellent qualities which the old laird, my patron that was, the inditer thereof said, possessed. I say the inditer, because it couldna have been the young laird himself, although he got the credit o't on the stone, for he was nae daub in my aught<sup>1</sup> at the Latin or any other language.

<sup>1</sup> *Nae daub in my aught.* No adept in my eyes.



However, he might improve himself at Edinburgh, where a' manner of genteel things were then to be got at an easy rate, and doubtless the young laird got a probationer at the College to write the epitaph. But I have often wondered sin' syne how he came to make it in Latin, for assuredly his dead parent, if he could have seen it, could not have read a single word o't, notwithstanding it was so vaunty<sup>1</sup> about his virtues and other civil and hospitable qualifications.

The coming of the laird's monumental stone had a great effect on me, then in a state of deep despondency for the loss of the first Mrs Balwhidder; and I thought I could not do a better thing, just by way of diversion in my heavy sorrow, than to get a well-shapen headstone made for her,—which, as I have hinted at in the record of the last year, was done and set up. But a headstone without an epitaph is no better than a body without the breath of life in't; and so it behoved me to make a poesy for the monument, the which I conned and pondered upon for many days. I thought that, as Mrs Balwhidder, worthy woman as she was, did not understand the Latin tongue, it would not do to put on what I had to say in that language, as the laird had done;—nor indeed would it have been easy, as I found upon the experimenting, to tell what I had to tell in Latin, which is naturally a crabbed language, and

<sup>1</sup> *Vaunty*. Boastful.



very difficult to write properly. I, therefore, after mentioning her age and the dates of her birth and departure, composed in sedate poetry the following epitaph, which may yet be seen on the tombstone.—

### EPITAPH.

A lovely Christian, spouse, and friend,  
Pleasant in life, and at her end.—  
A pale consumption dealt the blow  
That laid her here, with dust below.  
Sore was the cough that shook her frame ;  
That cough her patience did proclaim—  
And as she drew her latest breath,  
She said, “ The Lord is sweet in death.”  
O pious reader ! standing by,  
Learn like this gentle one to die.  
The grass doth grow and fade away,  
And time runs out by night and day ;  
The King of Terrors has command  
To strike us with his dart in hand.  
Go where we will, by flood or field,  
He will pursue and make us yield.  
But though to him we must resign  
The vesture of our part divine,  
There is a jewel in our trust  
That will not perish in the dust :  
A pearl of price, a precious gem,  
Ordnained for Jesus’ diadem ;  
Therefore, be holy while you can,  
And think upon the doom of man ;  
Repent in time and sin no more,—  
That, when the strife of life is o’er,  
On wings of love your soul may rise  
To dwell with angels in the skies,

Where psalms are sung eternally,  
And martyrs ne'er again shall die,  
But, with the saints, still bask in bliss,  
And drink the cup of blessedness.

This was greatly thought of at the time, and Mr Lorimore, who had a nerve for poesy himself in his younger years, was of opinion that it was so much to the purpose, and suitable withal, that he made his scholars write it out for their examination copies, at the reading whereof before the heritors, when the examination of the school came round, the tear came into my eye, and every one present sympathised with me in my great affliction for the loss of the first Mrs Balwhidder.

Andrew Lanshaw, as I have recorded, having come from the Glasgow College to the burial of his sister, my wife that was, stayed with me a month to keep me company; and staying with me, he was a great cordial. For the weather was wet and sleety, and the nights were stormy, so that I could go little out; and few of the elders came in, they being at that time old men in a feckless condition, not at all qualified to warsle<sup>1</sup> with the blasts of winter. But when Andrew left me to go back to his classes I was eerie and lonesome; and but for the getting of the monument ready, (which was a blessed entertainment to me in those dreary nights, with consulting anent the shape of it with John Truel, and meditating on the verse for the epitaph), I might have gone

<sup>1</sup> Warsle. Wrestle,

altogether demented. However, it pleased Him, who is the surety of the sinner, to help me through the Slough of Despond, and to set my feet on firm land, establishing my way thereon.

But the work of the monument, and the epitaph, could not endure for a constancy, and after it was done, I was again in great danger of sinking into the hypochonderies a second time. However, I was enabled to fight with my affliction, and by-and-by, as the spring began to open her green lattice, and to set out her flower-pots to the sunshine, and the time of the singing of birds was come, I became more composed and like myself. So I often walked in the fields, and held communion with nature, and wondered at the mysteries thereof.

On one of these occasions, as I was sauntering along the edge of Eaglesham-wood, looking at the industrious bee going from flower to flower, and at the idle butterfly that layeth up no store but perisheth ere it is winter, I felt as it were a spirit from on high descending upon me, a throb at my heart, and a thrill in my brain; and I was transported out of myself, and seized with the notion of writing a book. But what it should be about, I could not settle to my satisfaction. Sometimes I thought of an orthodox poem, like *Paradise Lost* by John Milton, wherein I proposed to treat more at large of Original Sin, and of the great mystery of Redemption. At others, I fancied that a connect treatise on the efficacy of Free Grace would

be more taking. But, although I made divers beginnings in both subjects, some new thought ever came into my head, and the whole summer passed away and nothing was done. I therefore postponed my design of writing a book till the winter, when I would have the benefit of the long nights. Before that, however, I had other things of more importance to think about. My servant lasses, having no eye of a mistress over them, wastered everything at such a rate, and made such a gal-ravitching in the house, that, long before the end of the year, the year's stipend was all spent, and I did not know what to do. At lang and length I mustered courage to send for Mr Auld, who was then living, and an elder. He was a douce<sup>1</sup> and discreet man, fair and well-doing in the world, and had a better handful of strong common sense than many even of the heritors. So I told him how I was situated, and conferred with him. He advised me, for my own sake, to look out for another wife, as soon as decency would allow, which, he thought, might very properly be after the turn of the year, by which time the first Mrs Balwhidder would be dead more than twelve months; and, when I mentioned my design to write a book, he said, (and he was a man of good discretion), that the doing of the book was a thing that would keep, but wasterful servants were a growing evil. So, upon his counselling, I resolved not to meddle with the book till I was married

<sup>1</sup> *Douce*. Quiet-going and sensible.

again, but employ the interim, between then and the turn of the year, in looking out for a prudent woman to be my second wife, strictly intending, (as I did perform), not to mint a word<sup>1</sup> about my choice, if I made one, till the whole twelve months and a day, from the date of the first Mrs Balwhidder's interment, had run out.

In this the hand of Providence was very visible, and lucky for me it was that I had sent for Mr Auld when I did send. The very week following, a sound began to spread in the parish that one of my lassies had got herself with bairn,—which was an awful thing to think had happened in the house of her master, and that master a minister of the gospel. Some there were,—for backbiting appertaineth to all conditions,—that jealoused and wondered if I had not a finger in the pie : which when Mr Auld heard, he bestirred himself in such a manful and godly way in my defence as silenced the clash,<sup>2</sup> telling that I was utterly incapable of any such thing, being a man of a guileless heart, and a spiritual simplicity, that would be ornamental in a child. We then had the latheron<sup>3</sup> summoned before the Session, and was not long of making her confess that the father was Nichol Snipe, Lord Glencairn's gamekeeper. Both she and Nichol were obligated to stand in

<sup>1</sup> *To mint a word.* "To mint" is to endeavour. The sense here may be "to venture a word about my choice"—that is, to the lady ; or, simply, to hint. (*Legatees.* Chap. IX.)

<sup>2</sup> *Clash.* Tittle-tattle,

<sup>3</sup> *Latheron.* Drab,

the kirk ; but Nichol was a graceless reprobate, for he came with two coats,—one buttoned behind him, and another buttoned before him—, and two wigs of my lord's, lent him by the valet-de-chamer,—the one over his face, and the other in the right way—; and he stood with his face to the church wall. When I saw him from the poopit, I said to him, “Nichol, you must turn your face towards me !” At the which he turned round, to be sure ; but there he presented the same show as his back. I was confounded, and did not know what to say, but cried out with a voice of anger, “Nichol, Nichol ! if ye had been a' back, ye wouldna hae been there this day ;”—which had such an effect on the whole congregation that the poor fellow suffered afterwards more derision than if I had rebuked him in the manner prescribed by the Session.<sup>1</sup>

This affair, with the previous advice of Mr Auld, was, however, a warning to me that no pastor of his parish should be long without a help-mate. Accordingly, as soon as the year was out, I set myself earnestly about the search for one ; but as the particulars fall properly within the scope and chronicle of the next year, I must reserve them for it. And I do not recollect that anything more particular befell in this, excepting that William Mutchkins, the father of Mr Mutchkins, the great spirit dealer in Glasgow, set up a change-house in the clachan, which was the first

<sup>1</sup> Note A. *The Session and Discipline.*



in the parish, and, if I could have helped, should have been the last ; for it was opening a howf<sup>1</sup> to all manner of wickedness, and was an immediate get<sup>2</sup> and offspring of the smuggling trade, against which I had so set my countenance. But William Mutchkins himself was a respectable man, and no house could be better ordered than his change. At a stated hour he made family worship,—for he brought up his children in the fear of God and the Christian religion. Although the house was full, he would go in to the customers, and ask them if they would want anything for half-an-hour, for that he was going to make exercise with his family ; and many a wayfaring traveller has joined in the prayer. There is no such thing, I fear, now-a-days, of publicans entertaining travellers in this manner.

<sup>1</sup> *Howf.* Shelter.

<sup>2</sup> *Get.* Progeny.



## CHAPTER VI

YEAR 1765

*Establishment of a whisky distillery—He is again married to Miss Lizy Kibbock—Her industry in the dairy—Her example diffuses a spirit of industry through the parish.*

AS there was little in the last year that concerned the parish, but only myself, so in this the like fortune continued; and, saving a rise in the price of barley, (occasioned, as was thought, by the establishment of a house for brewing whisky in a neighbouring parish), it could not be said that my people were exposed to the mutations and influences of the stars that ruled in the seasons of Ann. Dom. 1765. In the winter there was a dearth of fuel, such as has not been since; for when the spring loosened the bonds of the ice, three new coal-heughs were shanked<sup>1</sup> in the Douray moor, and ever since there has been a great plenty of that necessary article. Truly, it is very wonderful to see how things

<sup>1</sup> *Coal-heughs were shanked.* Coal-pits were sunk. A coal-shank is the shaft to the coals.

come round. When the talk was about the shanking of the heughs, and a paper to get folk to take shares in them was carried through the circumjacent parishes, it was thought a gowk's errand;<sup>1</sup> but no sooner was the coal reached but up sprung such a traffic that it was a godsend to the parish, and the opening of a trade and commerce that has (to use an old byword) brought gold in gowpins<sup>2</sup> amang us. From that time my stipend has been on the regular increase, and, therefore, I think that the incoming of the heritors must have been in like manner augmented.

Soon after this, the time was drawing near for my second marriage. I had placed my affections, with due consideration, on Miss Lizy Kibbock, the well-brought-up daughter of Mr Joseph Kibbock of the Gorbyholm, who was the first that made a speculation in the farming way in Ayrshire, and whose cheese were of such an excellent quality that they have, under the name of Delap-cheese, spread far and wide over the civilized world. Miss Lizy and I were married on the 29th day of April (with some inconvenience to both sides) on account of the dread that we had of being married in May; for it is said,

“ Of the marriages in May,  
The bairns die of a decay.”

However, married we were, and we hired the Irville chaise, and with Miss Jenny her sister,

<sup>1</sup> *Gowk's errand.* Fool's errand.

<sup>2</sup> *Gowpins.* Handfuls.

and Becky Cairns her niece, who sat on a port-manty at our feet, we went on a pleasure jaunt to Glasgow, where we bought a miracle of useful things for the manse that neither the first Mrs Balwhidder nor me ever thought of: the second Mrs Balwhidder that was had a geni<sup>1</sup> for management, and it was extraordinary what she could go through. Well may I speak of her with commendations; for she was the bee that made my honey, although at first things did not go so clear with us. For she found the manse rookit and herrit,<sup>2</sup> and there was such a supply of plenishing of all sort wanted that I thought myself ruined and undone by her care and industry. There was such a buying of wool to make blankets, with a booming of the meikle wheel to spin the same, and such birring of the little wheel for sheets and napery, that the manse was for many a day like an organ kist. Then we had milk cows, and the calves to bring up, and a kirning of butter, and a making of cheese; in short, I was almost by myself with the jangle and din, which prevented me from writing a book as I had proposed. And for a time I thought of the peaceful and kindly nature of the first Mrs Balwhidder with a sigh; but the outcoming was soon manifest. The second Mrs Balwhidder sent her butter on the market-days to Irville, and her cheese from time to time to Glasgow—to Mrs

<sup>1</sup> *Geni.* Genius.

<sup>2</sup> *Rookit and herrit.* Plundered and despoiled.

Firlot, that kept the huxtry in the Saltmarket—; and they were both so well made that our dairy was just a coining of money, insomuch that, after the first year, we had the whole tot of my stipend to put untouched into the bank.

But I must say that, although we were thus making siller like sclate stones, I was not satisfied in my own mind that I had got the manse merely to be a factory of butter and cheese, and to breed up veal calves for the slaughter. So I spoke to the second Mrs Balwhidder, and pointed out to her what I thought the error of our way; but she had been so ingrained with the profitable management of cows and grumphies<sup>1</sup> in her father's house that she could not desist,—at the which I was greatly grieved. By-and-by, however, I began to discern that there was something as good in her example as the giving of alms to the poor folk; for all the wives of the parish were stirred up by it into a wonderful thrift, and nothing was heard of in every house but of quiltings and wabs to weave; insomuch that, before many years came round, there was not a parish better stocked with blankets and napery than mine was within the bounds of Scotland.

It was about the Michaelmas of this year that Mrs Malcolm opened her shop. This she did chiefly on the advice of Mrs Balwhidder, who said it was far better to allow a little profit on the different haberdasheries that might be wanted

<sup>1</sup> *Grumphies.* Pigs.

than to send to the neighbouring towns an end's errand on purpose for them, none of the lasses that were so sent ever thinking of making less than a day's pay on every such occasion. In a word, it is not to be told how the second Mrs Balwhidder, my wife, showed the value of flying time, even to the concerns of this world, and was the mean of giving a life and energy to the housewifery of the parish that has made many a one beek his shins<sup>1</sup> in comfort that would otherwise have had but a cold coal to blow at. Indeed, Mr Kibbock, her father, was a man beyond the common, and had an insight of things by which he was enabled to draw profit and advantage where others could only see risk and detriment. He planted mounts of fir-trees on the bleak and barren tops of the hills of his farm,—the which everybody (and I among the rest) considered as a thrashing of the water and raising of bells. But as his tack ran his trees grew, and the plantations supplied him with stabs to make stake and rice<sup>2</sup> between his fields, which soon gave them a trig and orderly appearance, such as had never before been seen in the west country; and his example has, in this matter, been so followed that I have heard travellers, who have been in foreign countries, say that the shire of Ayr, for its bonny round

<sup>1</sup> *To beek his shins.* To toast his shins.

<sup>2</sup> *Stake and rice.* "Rice" is a thin bough or twig; and a hedge was made by stretching twigs between stakes driven into the ground.

green plantings on the tops of the hills, is above comparison either with Italy or Switzerland, where the hills are, as it were, in a state of nature.

Upon the whole, this was a busy year in the parish, and the seeds of many great improvements were laid. The king's road, which then ran through the Vennel, was mended ; but it was not till some years after, as I shall record by-and-by, that the "trust road," as it was called, was made, the which had the effect of turning the town inside out.

Before I conclude, it is proper to mention that the kirk-bell, which had to this time, from time immemorial, hung on an ash-tree, was one stormy night cast down by the breaking of the branch, which was the cause of the heritors agreeing to build the steeple. The clock was a mortification to the parish from the Lady Breadland, when she died some years after.

## CHAPTER VII

YEAR 1766

*The burning of the Breadland—A new bell, and also a steeple—Nanse Birrel found drowned in a well—The parish troubled with wild Irishmen.*

IT was in this Ann. Dom. that the great calamity happened, the which took place on a Sabbath evening in the month of February. Mrs Balwhidder had just infused (or masket) the tea, and we were set round the fireside to spend the night in an orderly and religious manner, along with Mr and Mrs Petticrew, who were on a friendly visitation to the manse, the mistress being full cousin to Mrs Balwhidder. Sitting, as I was saying, at our tea, one of the servant lasses came into the room with a sort of a panic laugh, and said, "What are ye all doing there when the Breadland's in a low?"<sup>1</sup>—"The Breadland in a low!" cried I.—"Oh, ay!" cried she: "bleezing at the windows and the rigging, and out at the lum, like a killogie."<sup>2</sup> Upon the which, we all went

<sup>1</sup> *In a low.* In a blaze.

<sup>2</sup> *Bleezing, &c.* Blazing at the windows and the roof, and out at the chimney, like a kiln stoke-hole.



to the door, and there, to be sure, we did see that the Breadland was burning, the flames crackling high out o'er the trees, and the sparks flying like a comet's tail in the firmament.

Seeing this sight, I said to Mr Petticrew that, in the strength of the Lord, I would go and see what could be done,—for it was as plain as the sun in the heavens that the ancient place of the Breadlands would be destroyed—; whereupon he accorded to go with me, and we walked at a lively course to the spot, and the people from all quarters were pouring in, and it was an awesome scene. But the burning of the house and the droves of the multitude were nothing to what we saw when we got forenent<sup>1</sup> the place. There was the rafters crackling, the flames raging, the servants running (some with bedding, some with looking-glasses, and others with chamber utensils, as little likely to be fuel to the fire, but all testifications to the confusion and alarm). Then there was a shout, “Whar’s Miss Girzie? Whar’s the Major?” The Major, poor man, soon cast up, lying upon a feather-bed, ill with his complaints, in the garden; but Lady Skimmilk was nowhere to be found. At last, a figure was seen in the upper flat, pursued by the flames; and that was Miss Girzie. Oh! it was a terrible sight to look at her in that jeopardy at the window, with her gold watch in the one hand and the silver teapot in the other, skreighing<sup>2</sup> like desperation for a

<sup>1</sup> *Forenent.* Near to.

<sup>2</sup> *Skreighing.* Screaming.

ladder and help. But, before a ladder or help could be found, the floor sunk down, and the roof fell in, and poor Miss Girzie, with her idols, perished in the burning. It was a dreadful business! I think, to this hour, how I saw her at the window, how the fire came in behind her, and claught<sup>1</sup> her like a fiery Belzebub, and bore her into perdition before our eyes. The next morning the atomy<sup>2</sup> of the body was found among the rubbish, with a piece of metal in what had been each of its hands,—no doubt the gold watch and the silver teapot. Such was the end of Miss Girzie, and of the Breadland, which the young laird, my pupil that was, by growing a resident at Edinburgh, never rebuilt. It was burnt to the very ground: nothing was spared but what the servants in the first flaught<sup>3</sup> gathered up in a hurry and ran with. No one could tell how the Major, who was then (as it was thought by the faculty) past the power of nature to recover, got out of the house, and was laid on the feather-bed in the garden. However, he never got the better of that night, and before Whitsunday he too was dead, and buried beside his sister's bones at the south side of the kirkyard dyke, where his cousin's son, that was his heir, erected the handsome monument, with the three urns and weeping cherubims, bearing witness to the great valour of the Major among the Hindoos, as well as to other

<sup>1</sup> *Claught*. Snatched.

<sup>2</sup> *Atomy*. Remains.

<sup>3</sup> *Flaught*. Confusion; or, perhaps, in the first handful.

commendable virtues, for which, as the epitaph says, he was universally esteemed and beloved by all who knew him in his public and private capacity.

But although the burning of the Breadland-House was justly called the great calamity, (on account of what happened to Miss Girzie with her gold watch and silver teapot), yet, as Providence never fails to bring good out of evil, it turned out a catastrophe that proved advantageous to the parish; for the laird, instead of thinking to build it up, was advised to let the policy out as a farm, and the tack was taken by Mr Coulter, than whom there had been no such man in the agriculturing line among us before, not even excepting Mr Kibbock of the Gorbyholm, my father-in-law that was. Of the stabling, Mr Coulter made a comfortable dwelling-house; and having rugget out<sup>1</sup> the evergreens and other unprofitable plants, (saving the twa ancient yew-trees which the near-begaun Major and his sister had left to go to ruin about the mansion-house), he turned all to production, and it was wonderful what an increase he made the land bring forth. He was from far beyond Edinburgh, and had got his insight among the Lothian farmers, so that he knew what crop should follow another; and nothing could surpass the regularity of his rigs and furrows. Well do I remember the admiration that I had when, in a fine sunny morning of the first spring after he took the Breadland,

<sup>1</sup> *Rugget out.* Pulled up.

I saw his braird<sup>1</sup> on what had been the cows' grass, as even and pretty as if it had been worked and stripped in the loom with a shuttle. Truly, when I look back at the example he set, and when I think on the method and dexterity of his management, I must say that his coming to the parish was a great godsend, and tended to do far more for the benefit of my people than if the young laird had rebuilt the Breadland-House in a fashionable style, as was at one time spoken of.

But the year of the great calamity was memorable for another thing. In the December foregoing, the wind blew, as I have recorded in the chronicle of the last year, and broke down the bough of the tree whereon the kirk-bell had hung from the time, as was supposed, of the persecution, before the bringing over of King William. Mr Kibbock, my father-in-law then that was, being a man of a discerning spirit, when he heard of the unfortunate fall of the bell, advised me to get the heritors to big<sup>2</sup> a steeple; which, when I thought of the expense, I was afraid to do. He, however, having a great skill in the heart of man, gave me no rest on the subject, but told me that if I allowed the time to go by till the heritors were used to come to the kirk without a bell, I would get no steeple at all. I often wondered what made Mr Kibbock so fond of a steeple, which is a thing that I never could see a good

<sup>1</sup> *Braird*. First sprouting of the grain.

<sup>2</sup> *To big*. To build.

reason for, saving that it is an ecclesiastical adjunct, like the gown and bands. However, he set me on to get a steeple proposed, and, after no little argol-bargling with the heritors, it was agreed to. This was chiefly owing to the instrumentality of Lady Moneyplack, who, in that winter, being much subjected to the rheumatics, one cold and raw Sunday morning (there being no bell to announce the time) came half-an-hour too soon to the kirk, which made her bestir herself to get an interest awakened among the heritors in behalf of a steeple.

But, when the steeple was built, a new contention arose. It was thought that the bell, which had been used in the ash-tree, would not do in a stone and lime fabric; so, after great agitation among the heritors, it was resolved to sell the old bell to a foundery in Glasgow, and buy a new bell suitable to the steeple, which was a very comely fabric. The buying of the new bell led to other considerations; and the old Lady Breadland, being at the time in a decaying condition, and making her will, left a mortification to the parish, as I have intimated, to get a clock; so that, by the time the steeple was finished, and the bell put up, the Lady Breadland's legacy came to be implemented, according to the ordination of the testatrix.<sup>1</sup>

Of the casualties that happened in this year, I should not forget to put down, as a thing for

<sup>1</sup> Note A. *The Heritors.*

remembrance, that an aged woman,—one Nanse Birrel, a distillator of herbs and well skilled in the healing of sores, who had a great repute among the quarriers and colliers,—having gone to the physic well in the sandy hills to draw water, was found, with her feet uppermost in the well, by some of the bairns of Mr Lorimore's school; and there was a great debate whether Nanse had fallen in by accident head foremost, or, in a temptation, thrown herself in that position, with her feet sticking up to the evil one,—for Nanse was a curious discontented, blear-eyed woman, and it was only with great ado that I could get the people keepit from calling her a witchwife.

I should likewise place on record that the first ass that had ever been seen in this part of the country came in the course of this year, with a gang of tinklers that made horn-spoons and mended bellows. Where they came from never was well made out; but, being a blackaviced<sup>1</sup> crew, they were generally thought to be Egyptians. They tarried about a week among us, living in tents, with their little ones squattling among the litter; and one of the older men of them set and tempered to me two razors that were as good as nothing, which he made better than when they were new.

Shortly after, (but I am not quite sure whether it was in the end of this year, or the beginning

<sup>1</sup> *Blackaviced.* Swarthy.



of the next, although I have a notion that it was in this), there came over from Ireland a troop of wild Irish,—seeking for work, as they said; but they made free quarters. They herrit the roosts of the clachan, and cutted the throat of a sow of ours,—the carcass of which they no doubt intended to steal; but something came over them, and it was found lying at the back side of the manse,—to the great vexation of Mrs Balwhidder; for she had set her mind on a clecking of pigs,<sup>1</sup> and only waited for the China boar that had been brought down from London by Lord Eaglesham to mend the breed of pork—a profitable commodity—that her father, Mr Kibbock, cultivated for the Glasgow market. The destruction of our sow, under such circumstances, therefore, was held to be a great crime and cruelty, and it had the effect to raise up such a spirit in the clachan that the Irish were obligated to decamp. They set out for Glasgow, where one of them was afterwards hanged for a fact; but the truth concerning how he did it, either I never heard, or it has passed from my mind like many other things I should have carefully treasured.

<sup>1</sup> *A clecking of pigs.* A brood of pigs.



## CHAPTER VIII

YEAR 1767

*Lord Eaglesham meets with an accident, which is the means of getting the parish a new road—  
I preach for the benefit of Nanse Banks, the schoolmistress, reduced to poverty.*

ALL things in our parish were now beginning to shoot up into a great prosperity. The spirit of farming began to get the upper hand of the spirit of smuggling, and the coal-heughs that had been opened in the Douray now brought a pour of money among us. In the manse, the thrift and frugality of the second Mrs Balwhidder throve exceedingly, so that we could save the whole stipend for the bank.

The king's highway, as I have related in the foregoing, ran through the Vennel, which was a narrow and a crooked street, with many big stones here and there, and every now and then, both in the spring and in the fall, a gathering of middens for the fields; insomuch that the coal-carts from the Douray moor were often reested<sup>1</sup> in the

<sup>1</sup> *Reested.* Arrested.

middle of the causey, and on more than one occasion some of them laired<sup>1</sup> altogether in the middens, and others of them broke down. Great complaint was made by the carters anent these difficulties, and there was, for many a day, a talk and sound of an alteration and amendment; but nothing was fulfilled in the matter till the month of March in this year, when the Lord Eaglesham was coming from London to see the new lands that he had bought in our parish. His lordship was a man of a genteel spirit, and very fond of his horses, which were the most beautiful creatures of their kind that had been seen in all the country side. Coming, as I was noting, to see his new lands, he was obliged to pass through the clachan one day, when all the middens were gathered out, reeking and sappy, in the middle of the causey. Just as his lordship was driving in with his prancing steeds, like a Jehu, at the one end of the Vennel, a long string of loaded coal-carts came in at the other, and there was hardly room for my lord to pass them. What was to be done? His lordship could not turn back, and the coal-carts were in no less perplexity. Everybody was out of doors to see and to help, when, in trying to get his lordship's carriage over the top of a midden, the horses gave a sudden loup, and coupéd<sup>2</sup> the coach, and threw my lord, head foremost, into the very scent-bottle of the whole commodity, which made him go perfect mad; and he

<sup>1</sup> *Laired.* Enmired.

<sup>2</sup> *Coupéd.* Overturned.

swore like a trooper that he would get an act of parliament to put down the nuisance ;—the which now ripened in the course of this year into the undertaking of the trust-road.

His lordship, being in a woeful plight, left the carriage and came to the manse, till his servant went to the castle for a change for him. But he could not wait nor abide himself: so he got the lend of my best suit of clothes, and was wonderfully jocose with both Mrs Balwhidder and me,—for he was a portly man, and I but a thin body, and it was really a droll curiosity to see his lordship clad in my garments.

Out of this accident grew a sort of a neighbourliness between that Lord Eaglesham and me; so that when Andrew Lanshaw, the brother that was of the first Mrs Balwhidder, came to think of going to India, I wrote to my lord for his behoof, and his lordship got him sent out as a cadet, and was extraordinary discreet<sup>1</sup> to Andrew when he went up to London to take his passage, speaking to him of me as if I had been a very saint, which the Searcher of Hearts knows I am far from thinking myself.

But to return to the making of the trust-road, which, as I have said, turned the town inside out: It was agreed among the heritors that it should run along the back side of the south houses, and that there should be steadings feued off on each side, according to a plan that was laid down; and

<sup>1</sup> *Discreet.* Polite.

this being gone into, the town gradually, in the course of years, grew up into that orderliness which makes it now a pattern to the country side. All this was mainly owing to the accident that befell the Lord Eaglesham,—which is a clear proof how improvements come about, as it were, by the immediate instigation of Providence, which should make the heart of man humble, and change his eyes of pride and haughtiness into a lowly demeanour.

But although this making of the trust-road was surely a great thing for the parish, and of an advantage to my people, we met, in this year, with a loss not to be compensated. That was the death of Nanse Banks, the schoolmistress. She had been long in a weak and frail state; but, being a methodical creature, still kept on the school, laying the foundation for many a worthy wife and mother. However, about the decline of the year her complaints increased, and she sent for me to consult about her giving up the school; and I went to see her on a Saturday afternoon, when the bit lassies, her scholars, had put the house in order, and gone home till the Monday.

She was sitting in the window-nook, reading THE WORD to herself, when I entered; but she closed the book, and put her spectacles in for a mark, when she saw me. As it was expected I would come, her easy-chair, with a clean cover, had been set out for me by the scholars, by which I discerned that there was something more than

common to happen. And so it appeared when I had taken my seat.

"Sir," said she, "I hae sent for you on a thing troubles me sairly. I have warsled with poortith<sup>1</sup> in this shed, which it has pleased the Lord to allow me to possess, but my strength is worn out, and I fear I maun yield in the strife;" and she wiped her eye with her apron. I told her, however, to be of good cheer; and then she said, "That she could no longer thole the din of the school, and that she was weary, and ready to lay herself down to die whenever the Lord was pleased to permit." "But," continued she, "what can I do without the school? and, alas! I can neither work nor want; and I am wae to go on the Session, for I am come of a decent family." I comforted her, and told her that, I thought, she had done so much good in the parish that the Session was deep in her debt, and that what they might give her was but a just payment for her service. "I would rather, however, sir," said she, "try first what some of my auld scholars will do, and it was for that I wanted to speak with you. If some of them would but just, from time to time, look in upon me, that I may not die alane; and the little pick and drap that I require would not be hard upon them. I am more sure that in this way their gratitude would be no discredit than I am of having any claim on the Session."

As I had always a great respect for an honest

<sup>1</sup> *Warsled with poortith.* Struggled with poverty.

pride, I assured her that I would do what she wanted ; and, accordingly, the very morning after, being Sabbath, I preached a sermon on the helplessness of them that have no help of man, (meaning aged single women, living in garret-rooms), whose forlorn state, in the gloaming of life, I made manifest to the hearts and understandings of the congregation in such a manner that many shed tears, and went away sorrowful.

Having thus roused the feelings of my people, I went round the houses on the Monday morning, and mentioned what I had to say more particularly about poor old Nanse Banks, the schoolmistress ; and truly I was rejoiced at the condition of the hearts of my people. There was a universal sympathy among them ; and it was soon ordered that, what with one and another, her decay should be provided for. But it was not ordained that she should be long heavy on their good-will. On the Monday the school was given up, and there was nothing but wailing among the bit lassies, the scholars, for getting the vacance (as the poor things said) because the mistress was going to lie down to dee. And, indeed, so it came to pass ; for she took to her bed the same afternoon, and, in the course of the week, dwindled away, and slippit out of this howling wilderness into the kingdom of heaven, on the Sabbath following, as quietly as a blessed saint could do. And here I should mention that the Lady Macadam, when I told her of Nanse Banks's case, inquired if she



was a snuffer, and, being answered by me that she was, her ladyship sent her a pretty French enamel box full of macabaw, a fine snuff that she had in a bottle; and among the macabaw was found a guinea, at the bottom of the box, after Nanse Banks had departed this life,—which was a kind thing of Lady Macadam to do.

About the close of this year there was a great sough<sup>1</sup> of old prophecies, foretelling mutations and adversities, chiefly on account of the canal that was spoken of to join the rivers of the Clyde and the Forth, it being thought an impossible thing to be done. And the Adam and Eve pear-tree, in our garden, budded out in an awful manner, and had divers flourishes on it at Yule,—which was thought an ominous thing, especially as the second Mrs Balwhidder was at the downlying with my eldest son, Gilbert, that is, the merchant in Glasgow. But nothing came o't; and the howdie said she had an easy time when the child came into the world,—which was on the very last day of the year,—to the great satisfaction of me, and of my people, who were wonderful lifted up because their minister had a man-child born unto him.

<sup>1</sup> *Sough*. A sucking, whistling sound, such as is made by the wind in the trees: then, a rumour.



## CHAPTER IX

YEAR 1768

*Lord Eaglesham uses his interest in favour of Charles Malcolm—The finding of a new school-mistress—Miss Sabrina Hooky gets the place—Change of fashions in the parish.*

IT'S a surprising thing how time flieth away, carrying off our youth and strength, and leaving us nothing but wrinkles and the ails of old age. Gilbert, my son, that is now a corpulent man and a Glasgow merchant, when I take up my pen to record the memorables of this Ann. Dom., seems to me yet but a suckling in swaddling clothes, mewing and peevish in the arms of his mother, who has been long laid in the cold kirkyard, beside her predecessor, in Abraham's bosom. It is not, however, my design to speak much anent my own affairs, (which would be a very improper and uncomely thing), but only of what happened in the parish, this book being for a witness and testimony of my ministry. Therefore, setting out of view both me and mine, I will now resuscitate the concerns of Mrs Malcolm and her children; for,

as I think, never was there such a visible preordination seen in the lives of any persons as was seen in those of this worthy decent woman and her well-doing offspring. Her morning was raw, and a sore blight fell upon her fortunes ; but the sun looked out on her mid-day, and her evening closed loun<sup>1</sup> and warm, and the stars of the firmament, that are the eyes of heaven, beamed as it were with gladness, when she lay down to sleep the sleep of rest.

Her son Charles was by this time grown up into a stout, buirdly<sup>2</sup> lad, and it was expected that, before the return of the Tobacco trader, he would have been out of his time, and a man afore the mast, which was a great step of preferment, as I heard say by persons skilled in seafaring concerns. But this was not ordered to happen ; for, when the Tobacco trader was lying in the harbour of Virginia in the North Americas, a pressgang that was in need of men for a man-of-war came on board, and pressed poor Charles, and sailed away with him on a cruise, nobody, for many a day, could tell where, till I thought of the Lord Eaglesham's kindness. His lordship having something to say with the king's government, I wrote to him, telling him who I was, and how jocose he had been when buttoned in my clothes (that he might recollect me), thanking him, at the same time, for his condescension and patronage to Andrew Lanshaw in his way to the East Indies. I then slipped in, at the end of the letter, a bit

<sup>1</sup> *Loun.* Serene.

<sup>2</sup> *Buirdly.* Well-set-up.

*nota-bene* concerning the case of Charles Malcolm, begging his lordship, on account of the poor lad's widow mother, to inquire at the government if they could tell us anything about Charles. In the due course of time, I got a most civil reply from his lordship, stating all about the name of the man-of war, and where she was; and, at the conclusion, his lordship said that I was lucky in having the brother of a Lord of the Admiralty on this occasion for my agent, as otherwise, from the vagueness of my statement, the information might not have been procured. Which remark of his lordship was long a great riddle to me, (for I could not think what he meant about an agent), till, in the course of the year, we heard that his own brother was concerned in the Admiralty. So that all his lordship meant was only to crack a joke with me; and that he was ever ready and free to do, as shall be related in the sequel, for he was an excellent man.

There being a vacancy for a schoolmistress, it was proposed to Mrs Malcolm that, under her superintendence, her daughter Kate, that had been learning great artifices in needle-work so long with Lady Macadam, should take up the school, and the Session undertook to make good to Kate the sum of five pounds sterling per annum, over and above what the scholars were to pay. But Mrs Malcolm said that she had not strength herself to warsle with so many unruly brats, and that Kate, though a fine lassie, was a tempestuous

spirit, and might lame some of the bairns in her passion ; and that selfsame night Lady Macadam wrote me a very complaining letter for trying to wile away her companion : her ladyship was a canary-headed woman, and given to flights and tantrums, having in her youth been a great toast among the quality. It would, however, have saved her from a sore heart had she never thought of keeping Kate Malcolm. For this year her only son, who was learning the art of war at an academy in France, came to pay her, his lady mother, a visit. He was a brisk and light-hearted stripling, and Kate Malcolm was budding into a very rose of beauty ; so between them a hankering began, which, for a season, was productive of great heaviness of heart to the poor old cripple lady : indeed, she assured me herself that all her rheumatics were nothing to the heart-ache which she suffered in the progress of this business. But that will be more treated of hereafter. Suffice it to say, for the present, that we have thus recorded how the plan for making Kate Malcolm our schoolmistress came to nought. It pleased Him, however, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, to send at this time among us a Miss Sabrina Hooky, the daughter of old Mr Hooky, who had been schoolmaster in a neighbouring parish. She had gone, after his death, to live with an auntie in Glasgow, who kept a shop in the Gallowgate. It was thought that the old woman would have left her heir to all her gatherings, and so she said she

would ; but alas ! our life is but within our lip. Before her testament was made she was carried suddenly off by an apoplectick,—an awful monument of the uncertainty of time and the nearness of eternity—, in her own shop, as she was in the very act of weighing out an ounce of snuff to a professor of the College, as Miss Sabrina herself told me. Being thus destitute, it happened that Miss Sabrina heard of the vacancy in our parish : as it were, just by the cry of a passing bird ; for she could not tell how, although I judge myself that William Keckle the elder had a hand in it, as he was at the time in Glasgow. She wrote me a wonderful well-penned letter, bespeaking the situation, which letter came to hand on the morn following Lady Macadam's stramash<sup>1</sup> to me about Kate Malcolm, and I laid it before the Session the same day ; so that, by the time her auntie's concern was taken off her hands, she had a home and a howf among us to come to, in the which she lived upwards of thirty years in credit and respect, although some thought she had not the art of her predecessor, and was more uppish in her carriage than befitted the decorum of her vocation. Hers, however, was but a harmless vanity ; and, poor woman, she needed all manner of graces to set her out, for she was made up of odds and ends, and had but one good eye, the other being blind, and just like a blue bead. At first she plainly set her cap for Mr Lorimore ; but,

<sup>1</sup> *Stramash*. Disturbance.

after oggling and goggling at him every Sunday in the kirk for a whole half-year and more, Miss Sabrina desisted in despair.

But the most remarkable thing about her coming into the parish was the change that took place in Christian names among us. Old Mr Hooky, her father, had, from the time he read his Virgil, maintained a sort of intromission with the nine muses, by which he was led to baptize her Sabrina, after a name mentioned by John Milton in one of his works. Miss Sabrina began by calling our Jennies Jessies, and our Nannies Nancies. Alas! I have lived to see even these likewise grow old-fashioned. She had also a taste in the mantua-making line, which she had learnt in Glasgow; and I could date from the very Sabbath of her first appearance in the kirk a change growing in the garb of the younger lassies, who from that day began to lay aside the silken plaidie over the head, (the which had been the pride and bravery of their grandmothers), and instead of the snood, that was so snod and simple, they hided their heads in round-eared bees-cap mutches, made of gauze and catgut, and other curious contrivances of French millendery. All this brought a deal of custom to Miss Sabrina, over and above the incomings and Candlemas offerings<sup>1</sup> of the school, insomuch that she saved money, and in

<sup>1</sup> *Candlemas Offerings.* In Scots Grammar Schools it was the custom for the pupils to bring gratuities to the master at the Candlemas term—February 2. There arose a spirit of



the course of three years had ten pounds to put in the bank.

At the time, these alterations and revolutions in the parish were thought a great advantage ; but now when I look back upon them, as a traveller on the hill over the road he has passed, I have my doubts. For with wealth come wants, like a troop of clamorous beggars at the heels of a generous man ; and it's hard to tell wherein the benefit of improvement in a country parish consists, especially to those who live by the sweat of their brow. But it is not for me to make reflections : my task and duty is to note the changes of time and habitudes.

competition in these offerings, which, in consequence, reached a considerable sum ; and a *Candlemas Crown* was conferred upon the pupil who contributed most : he was the king among his fellows. The badge entitled him to reign for six weeks, during which it was his prerogative to grant a holiday afternoon each week for the pupils, and to remit their punishments.



## CHAPTER X

YEAR 1769

*A toad found in the heart of a stone—Robert Malcolm, who had been at sea, returns from a northern voyage—Kate Malcolm's clandestine correspondence with Lady Macadam's son.*

I HAVE my doubts whether it was in the beginning of this year, or in the end of the last, that a very extraordinary thing came to light in the parish; but, howsoever that may be, there is nothing more certain than the fact, which it is my duty to record. I have mentioned already how it was that the toll, or trust-road, was set a-going on account of the Lord Eaglesham's tumbling on the midden in the Vennel. Well, it happened to one of the labouring men, in breaking the stones to make metal for the new road, that he broke a stone that was both large and remarkable, and in the heart of it (which was boss)<sup>1</sup> there was found a living creature that jumped out the moment it saw the light of heaven, to the great terrification of the man, who could think it was nothing but

<sup>1</sup> *Boss.* Hollow.

an evil spirit that had been imprisoned therein for a time. The man came to me like a demented creature, and the whole clachan gathered out, young and old, and I went at their head to see what the miracle could be,—for the man said it was a fiery dragon, spewing smoke and flames. But when we came to the spot, it was just a yird toad,<sup>1</sup> and the laddie weans nevelled<sup>2</sup> it to death with stones before I could persuade them to give over. Since then I have read of such things coming to light, in the Scots Magazine, a very valuable book.

Soon after the affair of “the wee deil in the stane” (as it was called), a sough reached us that the Americas were seized with the rebellious spirit of the ten tribes, and were snapping their fingers in the face of the king’s government. The news came on a Saturday night,—we had no newspapers in those days,—and was brought by Robin Modiwort, that fetched the letters from the Irville post. Thomas Fullarton, (he has been dead many a day), kept the grocery shop in Irville, and he had been in at Glasgow, as was his yearly custom, to settle his accounts, and to buy a hogs-head of tobacco, with sugar and other spiceries; and, being in Glasgow, Thomas was told by the merchant of a great rise in tobacco that had happened by reason of the contumacity of the plantations, and that it was thought that blood would

<sup>1</sup> *A yird toad.* An earthed or buried toad.

<sup>2</sup> *Nevelled.* To nevel really is to strike with the neive, or fist.

be spilt before things were ended, for that the King and Parliament were in a great passion with them. But as Charles Malcolm, in the king's ship, was the only one belonging to the parish that was likely to be art and part in the business, we were in a manner little troubled at the time with this first gasp of the monster of war, who, for our sins, was ordained to swallow up and devour so many of our fellow-subjects before he was bound again in the chains of mercy and peace.

I had, in the mean time, written a letter to the Lord Eaglesham, to get Charles Malcolm out of the clutches of the pressgang in the man-of-war; and about a month after his lordship sent me an answer, wherein was enclosed a letter from the captain of the ship saying, that Charles Malcolm was so good a man that he was reluctant to part with him, and that Charles himself was well contented to remain aboard. Anent which, his lordship said to me that he had written back to the captain to make a midshipman of Charles, and that he would take him under his own protection. This was great joy on two accounts to us all, especially to his mother: first, to hear that Charles was a good man, although in years still but a youth; and, secondly, that my lord had, of his own free-will, taken him under the wing of his patronage.

But the sweet of this world is never to be enjoyed without some of the sour. The coal bark between

Irville and Belfast, in which Robert Malcolm, the second son of his mother, was serving his time to be a sailor, got a charter (as it was called) to go with to Norway for deals. This grieved Mrs Malcolm to the very heart. For there was then no short cut by the canal, as now is, between the rivers of the Forth and Clyde, but every ship was obligated to go far away round by the Orkneys, which, although a voyage in the summer not overly dangerous, there being long days and short nights then, yet in the winter was far otherwise, many vessels being frozen up in the Baltic till the spring; and there was a story, told at the time, of an Irville bark coming home in the dead of the year, that lost her way altogether, and was supposed to have sailed north into utter darkness, for she was never more heard of: and many an awful thing was said of what the auld mariners about the shore thought concerning the crew of that misfortunate vessel. However, Mrs Malcolm was a woman of great faith, and, having placed her reliance on Him who is the orphant's stay and widow's trust, she resigned her bairn into His hands, with a religious submission to His pleasure, though the mother's tear of weak human nature was on her cheek and in her e'e. And her faith was well rewarded, for the vessel brought him safe home, and he had seen such a world of things that it was just to read a story-book to hear him tell of Elsinour and Gottenburg, and other fine and great places that we had never heard of till

that time ; and he brought me a bottle of Riga balsam, which for healing cuts was just miraculous, besides a clear bottle of Rososolus for his mother, —a spirit which for cordiality could not be told ; for, though since that time we have had many a sort of Dantzic cordial, I have never tasted any to compare with Robin Malcolm's Rososolus. The Lady Macadam, who had a knowledge of such things, declared it was the best of the best sort ;—for Mrs Malcolm sent to her ladyship some of it in a doctor's bottle, as well as to Mrs Balwhidder, who was then at the downlying with our daughter Janet—a woman now in the married state, that makes a most excellent wife, having been brought up with great pains, and well educated, as I shall have to record by-and-by.

About the Christmas of this year, Lady Macadam's son, having been perfected in the art of war at a school in France, had, with the help of his mother's friends and his father's fame, got a stand of colours in the Royal Scots regiment ; and he came to show himself in his regimentals to his lady mother, like a dutiful son, as he certainly was. It happened that he was in the kirk in his scarlets and gold on the same Sunday that Robert Malcolm came home from the long voyage to Norway for deals ; and I thought, when I saw the soldier and the sailor from the pulpit, that it was an omen of war among our harmless country folks, like swords and cannon amidst ploughs and sickles, coming upon us. And I became laden in spirit,

and had a most weighty prayer upon the occasion, which was long after remembered, many thinking, when the American war broke out, that I had been gifted with a glimmering of prophecy on that day.

It was during this visit to his lady mother that young Laird Macadam settled the correspondence with Kate Malcolm, which, in the process of time, caused us all so much trouble; for it was a clandestine concern. But the time is not yet ripe for me to speak of it more at large. I should, however, mention, before concluding this annal, that Mrs Malcolm herself was this winter brought to death's door by a terrible host that came on her in the kirk, by taking a kittling<sup>1</sup> in her throat. It was a terrification to hear her sometimes; but she got the better of it in the spring, and was more herself thereafter than she had been for years before. Her daughter Effie (or Euphemia, as she was called by Miss Sabrina, the school-mistress) was growing up to be a gleg and clever quean:<sup>2</sup> she was, indeed, such a spirit in her way, that the folks called her Spunkie; while her son William, who was the youngest of the five, was making a wonderful proficiency with Mr Lorimore. He was, indeed, a douce, well-doing laddie, of a composed nature; insomuch that the master said he was surely chosen for the ministry. In short, the more I think on what befell this family, and

<sup>1</sup> *Kittling*. Tickling.

<sup>2</sup> *A gleg . . . quean*. An acute . . . lass.

of the great meekness and Christian worth of the parent, I verily believe there never could have been, in any parish, such a manifestation of the truth that they who put their trust in the Lord are sure of having a friend that will never forsake them.



## CHAPTER XI

YEAR 1770

*This year a happy and tranquil one—Lord Eaglesham establishes a fair in the village—The show of Punch appears for the first time in the parish.*

THIS blessed Ann. Dom. was one of the Sabbaths of my ministry. When I look back upon it, all is quiet and good order : the darkest cloud of the smuggling had passed over, at least from my people, and the rumours of rebellion in America were but like the distant sound of the bars of Ayr. We sat, as it were, in a lown and pleasant place, beholding our prosperity like the apple-tree adorned with her garlands of flourishes, in the first fair mornings of the spring, when the birds are returning thanks to their Maker for the coming again of the seed-time, and the busy bee goeth forth from her cell to gather honey from the flowers of the field, and the broom of the hill, and the blue-bells and gowans which Nature, with a gracious and a gentle hand, scatters in the valley, as she walketh forth in her beauty

to testify to the goodness of the Father of all mercies.

Both at the spring and at the harvest sacraments,<sup>1</sup> the weather was as that which is in Paradise; there was a glad composure in all hearts, and the minds of men were softened towards each other. The number of communicants was greater than had been known for many years, and the tables were filled by the pious from many a neighbouring parish. Those of my hearers who had opposed my placing declared openly, for a testimony of satisfaction and holy thankfulness, that the tent, so surrounded as it was on both occasions, was a sight they never had expected to see. I was, to be sure, assisted by some of the best divines then in the land; but I had not been a sluggard myself in the vineyard.

Often, when I have thought on this year, so fruitful in pleasant intimacies, has the thought come into my mind that, as the Lord blesses the earth from time to time with a harvest of more than the usual increase, so, in like manner, He is sometimes for a season pleased to pour into the breasts of mankind a larger portion of good-will and charity, disposing them to love one another, to be kindly to all creatures, and filled with the delight of thankfulness to Himself, which is the greatest of blessings.

It was in this year that the Earl of Eaglesham ordered the fair to be established in the village.

<sup>1</sup> Note A. *Communion Services.*

It was a day of wonderful festivity to all the bairns, and lads and lassies, for miles round. I think, indeed, that there never has been since such a fair as the first; for although we have more mountebanks and merry-andrews now, and richer cargoes of groceries and packman's stands, yet there has been a falling-off in the light-hearted daffing,<sup>1</sup> while the hobleshow<sup>s</sup><sup>1</sup> in the change-houses have been awfully augmented. It was on this occasion that Punch's opera was first seen in our country side, and, surely, never was there such a funny curiosity; for although Mr Punch himself was but a timber idol, he was as droll as a true living thing, and napped with his head so comical; but oh! he was a sorrowful contumacious captain, and it was just a sport to see how he rampaged, and triumphed, and sang. For months after, the laddie weans did nothing but squeak and sing like Punch. In short, a blithe spirit was among us throughout this year, and the briefness of the chronicle bears witness to the innocence of the time.

<sup>1</sup> *Daffing . . . hobleshow<sup>s</sup>. Frolics . . . uproars.*

## CHAPTER XII

YEAR 1771

*The nature of Lady Macadam's amusements—  
She intercepts letters from her son to Kate  
Malcolm.*

IT was in this year that my troubles with Lady Macadam's affair began. She was a woman (as I have by hint here and there intimated) of a prelatic disposition, seeking all things her own way, and not overly scrupulous about the means, which I take to be the true humour of prelacy. She was come of a high episcopal race in the east country, where sound doctrine had been long but little heard, and she considered the comely humility of a presbyter as the wickedness of hypocrisy; so that, saving in the way of neighbourly visitation, there was no sincere communion between us. Nevertheless, with all her vagaries, she had the element of a kindly spirit, which would sometimes kythe<sup>1</sup> in actions of charity that showed symptoms of a true Christian grace had it been properly cultivated; but her morals had been

<sup>1</sup> *Kythe.* Manifest itself.

greatly neglected in her youth, and she would waste her precious time, in the long winter nights, playing at the cards with her visitors, in the which thriftless and sinful pastime she was at great pains to instruct Kate Malcolm, which I was grieved to understand. What I most misliked in her ladyship, however, was a lightness and juvenility of behaviour altogether unbecoming her years: she was far past threescore, having been long married without children. Her son, the soldier officer, came so late that it was thought she would have been taken up as an evidence in the Douglas cause.<sup>1</sup> She was, to be sure, crippled with the rheumatics, and no doubt the time hung heavy on her hands; but the best friends of recreation and sport must allow that an old woman sitting whole hours jingling with that paralytic chattel a spinnet was not a natural object! What, then, could be said for her singing Italian songs, and getting all the newest from Vauxhall in London,—a boxful at a time,—with new novel-books and trinkum-trankum flowers and feathers, and sweetmeats, sent to her by a lady of the blood royal of Paris? As for the music, she was at great pains to instruct Kate, which, with the other things she taught, were sufficient (as my lady said herself) to qualify poor Kate for a duchess or a governess; in either of which capacities, her ladyship assured Mrs Malcolm, she would do honour to her instructor, meaning her own

<sup>1</sup> The *Douglas Cause* occupied the Courts from 1762 to 1769.

self. But I must come to the point anent the affair.

One evening, early in the month of January, as I was sitting by myself in my closet studying the Scots Magazine, (I well remember the new number had come but that very night), Mrs Balwhidder being at the time busy with the lasses in the kitchen, and superintending, as her custom was, (for she was a clever woman), a great wool-spinning we then had, both little wheel and meikle wheel, for stockings and blankets;—sitting, as I was saying, in the study, with the fire well gathered up, for a night's reflection, a prodigious knocking came to the door, by which the book was almost startled out of my hand, and all the wheels in the house were silenced at once. This was her ladyship's flunkey, to beg me to go to her, whom he described as in a state of desperation. Christianity required that I should obey the summons; so, with what haste I could, thinking that, perhaps, as she had been low-spirited for some time about the young laird's going to the Indies, she might have got a cast of grace, and been wakened in despair to the state of darkness in which she had so long lived, I made as few steps of the road between the manse and her house as it was in my ability to do.

On reaching the door, I found a great light in the house—candles burning upstairs and downstairs,—and a sough of something extraordinary going on. I went into the dining-room, where

her ladyship was wont to sit ; but she was not there,—only Kate Malcolm all alone, busily picking bits of paper from the carpet. When she looked up, I saw that her eyes were red with weeping, and I was alarmed, and said, “ Katy, my dear, I hope there is no danger ? ” Upon which the poor lassie rose, and, flinging herself in a chair, covered her face with her hands, and wept bitterly.

“ What is the old fool doing with the wench ? ” cried a sharp, angry voice from the drawing-room ; “ why does not he come to me ? ” It was the voice of Lady Macadam herself, and she meant me. So I went to her ; but, oh ! she was in a far different state from what I had hoped. The pride of this world had got the upper hand of her, and was playing dreadful antics with her understanding. There was she, painted like a Jezebel, with gum-flowers<sup>1</sup> on her head, as was her custom every afternoon, sitting on a settee (for she was lame) ; and in her hand she held a letter. “ Sir,” said she, as I came into the room, “ I want you to go instantly to that young fellow, your clerk, [meaning Mr Lorimore, the schoolmaster, who was likewise session-clerk and precentor] and tell him I will give him a couple of hundred pounds to marry Miss Malcolm without delay, and undertake to procure him a living from some of my friends.”

“ Softly, my lady, you must first tell me the meaning of all this haste of kindness,” said I, in

<sup>1</sup> *Gum-flowers.* Artificial flowers.



my calm, methodical manner; at the which she began to cry and sob like a petted bairn, and to bewail her ruin and the dishonour of her family. I was surprised, and beginning to be confounded. At length out it came. The flunkey had that night brought two London letters from the Irville post, and, Kate Malcolm being out of the way when he came home, he took them both in to her ladyship on the silver server, as was his custom. Her ladyship, not jealousing that Kate could have a correspondence with London, thought both the letters were for herself, for they were franked; so, as it happened, she opened the one that was for Kate, and this, too, from the young laird, her own son. She could not believe her eyes when she saw the first words in his hand of write, and she read, and she better read, till she read all the letter; by which she came to know that Kate and her darling were trysted, and that this was not the first love-letter which had passed between them. She, therefore, tore it in pieces, and sent for me, and screamed for Kate: in short, went, as it were, off at the head, and was neither to bind nor to hold on account of this intrigue, as she, in her wrath, stigmatized the innocent gallanting of poor Kate and the young laird.

I listened in patience to all she had to say anent the discovery, and offered her the very best advice; but she derided my judgment, and, because I would not speak outright to Mr Lormore, and get him to marry Kate off hand, bade

me good-night with an air, and sent for him herself. He, however, was on the brink of marriage with his present worthy helpmate, and declined her ladyship's proposals,—which angered her still more. But although there was surely a great lack of discretion in all this, and her ladyship was entirely overcome with her passion, she would not part with Kate, nor allow her to quit the house with me, but made her sup with her as usual that night, calling her sometimes a perfidious baggage, and at other times, forgetting her delirium, speaking to her as kindly as ever. At night, Kate as usual helped her ladyship into her bed: this she told me with tears in her eyes next morning; and when Lady Macadam, as was her wont, bent to kiss her for good-night, she suddenly recollected “the intrigue,” and gave Kate such a slap on the side of the head as quite dislocated for a time the intellects of the poor young lassie. Next morning, Kate was solemnly advised never to write again to the laird, while the lady wrote him a letter, which, she said, would be as good as a birch to the breech of the boy. Nothing, therefore, for some time,—indeed, throughout the year,—came of this matter; but her ladyship, when Mrs Balwhidder soon after called on her, said that I was a nose-of-wax,<sup>1</sup> and that she never would speak to me again, which, surely, was not a polite thing to say to Mrs Balwhidder, my second wife.

<sup>1</sup> *Nosc-of-wax.* A “softy.”

This stramash was the first time that I had interposed in the family concerns of my people, for it was against my nature to make or meddle with private actions, saving only such as in course of nature came before the Session; but I was not satisfied with the principles of Lady Macadam, and I began to be weary about Kate Malcolm's situation with her ladyship, whose ways of thinking, I saw, were not to be depended on, especially in those things wherein her pride and vanity were concerned. But the time ran on, the butterflies and the blossoms were succeeded by the leaves and the fruit; and nothing of a particular nature farther molested the general tranquillity of this year, about the end of which there came on a sudden frost, after a tack of wet weather. The roads were just a sheet of ice, like a frozen river, insomuch that the coal-carts could not work; and one of our cows,—Mrs Balwhidder said, after the accident, it was our best; but it was not so much thought of before,—fell in coming from the glebe to the byre, and broke its two hinder legs, which obligated us to kill it, in order to put the beast out of pain. As this happened after we had salted our mart,<sup>1</sup> it occasioned us to have a double crop of puddings, and such a show of hams in the kitchen as was a marvel to our visitors to see.

<sup>1</sup> *After we had salted our mart.* At Martinmas, the cow or ox fed for the winter's provision was killed, cut up, and preserved: the mart was salted. The intestines, when stuffed with oatmeal and suet, mixed with blood and seasoned, were known as "black puddings."

## CHAPTER XIII

YEAR 1772

*The detection of Mr Heckletext's guilt—He threatens to prosecute the elders for defamation—The Muscovy duck gets an operation performed on it.*

ON New-Year's night, this year, a thing happened, which, in its own nature, was a trifle; but it turned out as a mustard-seed that grows into a great tree.

One of the elders, who has long been dead and gone, came to the manse about a fact that was found out in the clachan, and after we had discoursed on it some time he rose to take his departure. I went with him to the door with the candle in my hand,—it was a clear frosty night, with a sharp wind—; and the moment I opened the door, the blast blew out the candle, so that I heedlessly, with the candlestick in my hand, walked with him to the yett without my hat. By this I took a sore cold in my head that brought on a dreadful toothache, insomuch that I was obligated to go into Irville to get the tooth

drawn; and this caused my face to swell to such a fright that, on the Sabbath-day, I could not preach to my people.

There was, however, at that time, a young man, one Mr Heckletext, tutor in Sir Hugh Montgomerie's family, who had shortly before been licensed. Finding that I would not be able to preach myself, I sent to him, and begged he would officiate for me, which he very pleasantly consented to do, being, like all the young clergy, thirsting to show his light to the world. 'Twixt the fore and afternoon worship, he took his check<sup>1</sup> of dinner at the manse, and I could not but say that he seemed both discreet and sincere. Judge, however, what was brewing, when the same night Mr Lorimore came and told me that Mr Heckletext was the suspected person anent the fact that had been instrumental, in the hand of a chastising Providence, to afflict me with the toothache,—in order, as it afterwards came to pass, to bring the hidden hypocrisy of the ungodly preacher to light. It seems that the donsie<sup>2</sup> lassie who was in fault had gone to the kirk in the afternoon, and seeing who was in the pulpit, where she expected to see me, was seized with the hysterics, and taken with her crying on the spot, the which, being untimely, proved the death of both mother and bairn, before the thing was properly laid to the father's charge.

This caused a great uproar in the parish. I

<sup>1</sup> *Check.* Snack.

<sup>2</sup> *Donsie.* Unfortunate.

was sorely blamed to let such a man as Mr Heckle-text go up into my pulpit, although I was as ignorant of his offences as the innocent child that perished; and, in an unguarded hour, to pacify some of the elders, who were just distracted about the disgrace, I consented to have him called before the Session. He obeyed the call, and in a manner that I will never forget; for he was a Sorrow<sup>1</sup> of sin and audacity, and demanded to know why, and for what reason, he was summoned. I told him the whole affair in my calm and moderate way; but it was oil cast upon a burning coal. He flamed up in a terrible passion; threepit at<sup>2</sup> the elders that they had no proof whatever of his having had any trafficking in the business (which was the case; for it was only a notion, the poor deceased lassie never having made a disclosure); called them libellous conspirators against his character, which was his only fortune; and concluded by threatening to punish them, though he exempted me from the injury which their slanderous insinuations had done to his prospects in life. We were all terrified, and allowed him to go away without uttering a word; and, sure enough, he did bring a plea in the courts of Edinburgh against Mr Lorimore and the elders for damages, laid at a great sum.

What might have been the consequence, no one can tell; but soon after he married Sir Hugh's

<sup>1</sup> *Sorrow.* The word is used as if to denote a personification.

<sup>2</sup> *Threepit at.* Kept insisting to.



housekeeper, and went with her into Edinburgh, where he took up a school; and, before the trial came on, (that is to say, within three months of the day that I myself married them), Mrs Heckle-text was delivered of a thriving lad bairn, which would have been a witness for the elders, had the worst come to the worst. This was, indeed, we all thought, a joyous deliverance to the parish, and it was a lesson to me never to allow any preacher to mount my pulpit, unless I knew something of his moral character.

In other respects, this year passed very peaceably in the parish: there was a visible increase of worldly circumstances, and the hedges which had been planted along the toll-road began to put forth their branches, and to give new notions of orderliness and beauty to the farmers. Mrs Malcolm heard from time to time from her son Charles, on board the man-of-war the *Avenger*, where he was midshipman; and he had found a friend in the captain, that was just a father to him. Her second son, Robert, being out of his time at Irville, went to the Clyde to look for a berth, and was hired to go to Jamaica in a ship called the *Trooper*. He was a lad of greater sobriety of nature than Charles,—douce, honest, and faithful—; and when he came home, though he brought no limes to me to make punch, like his brother, he brought a Muscovy duck to Lady Macadam, who had, as I have related, in a manner educated his sister Kate.



That duck was the first of the kind we had ever seen, and many thought it was of the goose species, only with short bowly legs. It was, however, a tractable and homely beast; and after some confabulation, (as my lady herself told Mrs Balwhidder), it was received into fellowship by her other ducks and poultry. It is not, however, so much on account of the rarity of the creature that I have introduced it here, as for the purpose of relating a wonderful operation that was performed on it by Miss Sabrina, the schoolmistress. There happened to be a sack of beans in our stable, and Lady Macadam's hens and fowls, which were not overly fed at home through the inattention of her servants, being great stravaigers<sup>1</sup> for their meat, in passing the door went in to pick, and the Muscovy, seeing a hole in the bean-sack, dabbled out a crapful before she was disturbed. The beans swelled on the poor bird's stomach, and her crap<sup>2</sup> bellied out like the kyte<sup>3</sup> of a Glasgow magistrate, until it was just a sight to be seen, with its head back on its shoulders. The bairns of the clachan followed it up and down, crying, "The lady's muckle jock's aye growing bigger," till every heart was wae for the creature. Some thought it was afflicted with a tympany, and others, that it was the natural way for suchlike ducks to, cleck<sup>4</sup> their young. In short, we were all concerned. My lady, having a

<sup>1</sup> *Stravaigers*. Wanderers.

<sup>3</sup> *Kyte*. Belly.

<sup>2</sup> *Crap*. Crop.

<sup>4</sup> *Cleck*. Hatch.

great opinion of Miss Sabrina's skill, had a consultation with her on the case, at which Miss Sabrina advised that what she called the Cæsarean operation should be tried, which she herself performed accordingly: opening the creature's crap, and taking out as many beans as filled a mutchkin-stoup,<sup>1</sup> after which she sewed it up; and the Muscovy went its way to the water-side, and began to swim, and was as jocund as ever, insomuch that in three days after it was quite cured of all the consequences of its surfeit.

I had at one time a notion to send an account of this to the Scots Magazine; but something always came in the way to prevent me, so that it has been reserved for a place in this chronicle, being, after Mr Heckletext's affair, the most memorable thing in our history of this year.

<sup>1</sup> *Mutchkin-stoup*. A flagon holding a mutchkin. The old Scots liquid measure was 128 gills = 32 mutchkins = 16 chopins = 8 pints = 4 quarts = 1 gallon.

## CHAPTER XIV

YEAR 1773

*The new school-house—Lord Eaglesham comes down to the castle—I refuse to go and dine there on Sunday, but go on Monday, and meet with an English Dean.*

IN this Ann. Dom. there was something like a plea getting to a head, between the Session and some of the heritors,<sup>1</sup> about a new school-house, the thatch having been torn from the rigging of the old one by a blast of wind, on the first Monday of February, by which a great snow storm got admission, and the school was rendered utterly uninhabitable. The smaller sort of lairds were very willing to come into the plan with an extra contribution,—because they respected the master, and their bairns were at the school—; but the gentlemen who had tutors in their own houses, were not so manageable, and some of them even went so far as to say that the kirk, being only wanted on Sunday, would do very well for a school all the rest of the week. This was a very

<sup>1</sup> Note A. *The Heritors.*

profane way of speaking; and I was resolved to set myself against any such thing, and to labour, according to the power and efficacy of my station, to get a new school built.

Many a meeting the Session had on the subject; and the heritors debated, and discussed, and revised their proceedings, and still no money for the needful work was forthcoming. Whereupon it happened, one morning as I was rummaging in my scrutoire, that I laid my hand on the Lord Eaglesham's letter anent Charles Malcolm; and it was put into my head at that moment that if I was to write to his lordship, who was the greatest heritor, and owned now the major part of the parish, by his help and influence I might be an instrument to the building of a comfortable new school. Accordingly, I sat down and wrote my lord all about the accident, and the state of the school-house, and the divisions and seditions among the heritors, and sent the letter to him at London by the post the same day, without saying a word to any living soul on the subject.

This in me was an advised thought; for, by the return of post, his lordship with his own hand, in a most kind manner, authorised me to say that he would build a new school at his own cost, and bade me go over and consult about it with his steward at the castle, to whom he had written by the same post the necessary instructions. Nothing could exceed the gladness which the news gave to the

whole parish; and none said more in behalf of his lordship's bounty and liberality than the heritors, especially those gentry who grudged the undertaking when it was thought that it would have to come out of their own pock-nook.

In the course of the summer, just as the roof was closing in of the school-house, my lord came to the castle with a great company, and was not there a day till he sent for me to come over, on the next Sunday, to dine with him. But I sent him word that I could not do so, for it would be a transgression of the Sabbath; which made him send his own gentleman to make his apology for having taken so great a liberty with me, and to beg me to come on the Monday. This I did accordingly, and nothing could be better than the discretion<sup>1</sup> with which I was used. There was a vast company of English ladies and gentlemen, and his lordship, in a most jocose manner, told them all how he had fallen on the midden, and how I had clad him in my clothes, and there was a wonder of laughing and diversion. But the most particular thing in the company was a large, round-faced man with a wig, a dignitary in some great Episcopalian church in London, who was extraordinary condescending towards me, drinking wine with me at the table, and saying weighty sentences, in a fine style of language, about the becoming grace of simplicity and innocence of

<sup>1</sup> *Discretion.* Civility.

heart in the clergy of all denominations of Christians; which I was pleased to hear, for, really, he had a proud red countenance, and I could not have thought he was so mortified to humility within, had I not heard with what sincerity he delivered himself, and seen how much reverence and attention was paid to him by all present, particularly by my lord's chaplain, who was a pious and pleasant young divine, though educated at Oxford for the Episcopalian persuasion.

One day, soon after, as I was sitting in my closet conning a sermon for the next Sunday, I was surprised by a visit from the dean (as the dignity was called). He had come, he said, to wait on me as rector of the parish,—for so, it seems, they call a pastor in England—, and to say that, if it was agreeable, he would take a family dinner with us before he left the castle. I could make no objection to this kindness; but said that I hoped my lord would come with him, and that we would do our best to entertain them with all suitable hospitality. About an hour or so after he had returned to the castle, one of the flunkeys brought a letter from his lordship, to say that not only he would come with the dean, but that they would bring his other guests with them; and that, as they could only drink London wine, the butler would send me a hamper in the morning, assured (as he was pleased to say) that Mrs Balwhidder would otherwise provide good cheer.

This notification, however, was a great trouble



to my wife, who was only used to manufacture the produce of our glebe and yard to a profitable purpose, and not used to the treatment of deans and lords, and other persons of quality. However, she was determined to stretch a point on this occasion; and we had, as all present declared, a charming dinner. For, fortunately, one of the sows had a litter of pigs a few days before, and, in addition to a goose (that is but a boss bird), we had a roasted pig with an apple in its mouth, which was just a curiosity to see. My lord called it a tithe pig; but I told him it was one of Mrs Balwhidder's own clecking, which saying of mine made no little sport when expounded to the dean.

But, och how! this was the last happy summer that we had for many a year in the parish; and an omen of the dule that ensued was in a sacrilegious theft that a daft woman, Jenny Gaffaw, and her idiot daughter did in the kirk, by tearing off and stealing the green serge lining of my lord's pew, to make, as they said, a hap for their shoulders in the cold weather. Saving, however, the sin, we paid no attention at the time to the mischief and tribulation that so unheard-of a trespass boded to us all. It took place about Yule, when the weather was cold and frosty, and poor Jenny was not very able to go about seeking her meat as usual. The deed, however, was done mainly by her daughter, who, when brought before me, said "her poor mother's back had mair need of claes



than the kirk-boards ;” which was so true a thing that I could not punish her, but wrote anent it to my lord, who not only overlooked the offence, but sent orders to the servants at the castle to be kind to the poor woman, and the natural,<sup>1</sup> her daughter.

<sup>1</sup> Note C. *Naturals*.

## CHAPTER XV

YEAR 1774

*The murder of Jean Glaikit—The young Laird Macadam comes down and marries Kate Malcolm—The ceremony performed by me, and I am commissioned to break the matter to Lady Macadam—Her behaviour.*

WHEN I look back on this year, and compare what happened therein with the things that had gone before, I am grieved to the heart, and pressed down with an afflicted spirit. We had, as may be read, trials and tribulations in the days that were past, and in the rank and boisterous times of the smuggling there was much sin and blemish among us; but nothing so dark and awful as what fell out in the course of this unhappy year. The evil omen of daft Jenny Gaffaw's, and her daughter's, sacrilege had soon a bloody verification.

About the beginning of the month of March in this year the war in America was kindling so fast that the government was obligated to send soldiers over the sea, in the hope to quell the rebellious temper of the plantations; and a party

of a regiment that was quartered at Ayr was ordered to march to Greenock, to be there shipped off. The men were wild and wicked profligates, without the fear of the Lord before their eyes, and some of them had drawn up with light women in Ayr, who followed them on their march. This the soldiers did not like, not wishing to be troubled with such gear in America; so the women, when they got the length of Kilmarnock, were ordered to retreat and go home, which they all did but one Jean Glaikit, who persisted in her intent to follow her joe, Patrick O'Neil, a Catholic Irish corporal. The man did (as he said) all in his capacity to persuade her to return; but she was a contumacious limmer,<sup>1</sup> and would not listen to reason, so that, in passing along our toll-road, from less to more the miserable wretches fell out, and fought, and the soldier put an end to her with a hasty knock on the head with his firelock, and marched on after his comrades.

The body of the woman was, about half-an-hour after, found by the scholars of Mr Lorimore's school, who had got the play to see the marching and to hear the drums of the soldiers. Dreadful was the shout and the cry throughout the parish at this foul work. Some of the farmer lads followed the soldiers on horseback, and others ran to Sir Hugh, who was a justice of the peace, for his advice. Such a day as that was!

<sup>1</sup> *Limmer*. Worthless woman.

However, the murderer was taken, and, with his arms tied behind him with a cord, he was brought back to the parish, where he confessed before Sir Hugh the deed, and how it happened. He was then put in a cart, and, being well guarded by six of the lads, was taken to Ayr jail.

It was not long after this that the murderer was brought to trial, and, being found guilty on his own confession, he was sentenced to be executed, and his body to be hung in chains near the spot where the deed was done. I thought that all in the parish would have run to desperation with horror when the news of this came, and I wrote immediately to the Lord Eaglesham to get this done away by the merciful power of the government, which he did, to our great solace and relief.

In the autumn, the young Laird Macadam, being ordered with his regiment for the Americas, got leave from the king to come and see his lady mother before his departure. But it was not to see her only, as will presently appear.

Knowing how much her ladyship was averse to the notion he had of Kate Malcolm, he did not write of his coming, lest she would send Kate out of the way, but came in upon them at a late hour, as they were wasting their precious time, as was the nightly wont of my lady, with a pack of cards; and, so far was she from being pleased to see him, no sooner did she behold his

face but, like a tap of tow,<sup>1</sup> she kindled upon both him and Kate, and ordered them out of her sight and house. The young folk had discretion : Kate went home to her mother, and the laird came to the manse, and begged us to take him in. He then told me what had happened ; and that, having bought a captain's commission, he was resolved to marry Kate, and hoped I would perform the ceremony, if her mother would consent. "As for mine," said he : "she will never agree ; but when the thing is done her pardon will not be difficult to get, for, with all her whims and caprice, she is generous and affectionate." In short, he so wiled and beguiled me that I consented to marry them, if Mrs Malcolm was agreeable. "I will not disobey my mother," said he, "by asking her consent, which I know she will refuse ; and, therefore, the sooner it is done the better."

So we then stepped over to Mrs Malcolm's house, where we found that saintly woman, with Kate and Effie and Willie, sitting peacefully at their fireside, preparing to read their Bibles for the night. When we went in, and when I saw Kate, that was so ladylike there, with the decent humility of her parent's dwelling, I could not but think she was destined for a better station ; and when I looked at the captain, a handsome youth,

<sup>1</sup> *Tap of tow*. The "tap of tow" or lint-top upon the distaff.

"Quoth I, For shame, ye dirty dame,  
Gae spin your tap o' tow."

— *The Weary Pund o' Tow*.

I thought that surely their marriage is made in heaven. And so I said to Mrs Malcolm, who after a time consented, and likewise agreed that her daughter should go with the captain to America; for her faith and trust in the goodness of Providence was great and boundless, striving, as it were, to be even with its tender mercies. Accordingly, the captain's man was sent to bid the chaise wait that had taken him to the lady's, and the marriage was sanctified by me before we left Mrs Malcolm's. No doubt, they ought to have been proclaimed three several Sabbaths; but I satisfied the Session, at our first meeting, on account of the necessity of the case.<sup>1</sup>

The young couple went in the chaise travelling to Glasgow, authorising me to break the matter to Lady Macadam,—which was a sore task; but I was spared from the performance. For her ladyship had come to herself, and, thinking on her own rashness in sending away Kate and the captain in the way she had done, she was like one by herself. All the servants were scattered out and abroad in quest of the lovers. Some of them, seeing the chaise drive from Mrs Malcolm's door with them in it, and me coming out, jealous<sup>2</sup> what had been done; and they told their mistress outright of the marriage,—which was to her like a clap of thunder, insomuch that she flung herself back in her settee, and was beating and drumming with her heels on the floor, like a madwoman in

<sup>1</sup> Note A. *Marriages.*

<sup>2</sup> *Jealous.* Suspected.

Bedlam, when I entered the room. For some time she took no notice of me, but continued her din; but, by-and-by, she began to turn her eyes in fiery glances upon me, till I was terrified lest she would fly at me with her claws in her fury. At last she stopped all at once, and in a calm voice said, "But it cannot now be helped. Where are the vagabonds?"—"They are gone," replied I.—"Gone?" cried she. "Gone where?"—"To America, I suppose," was my answer; upon which she again threw herself back in the settee, and began to drum and beat with her feet as before. But, not to dwell on small particularities, let it suffice to say that she sent her coachman on one of her coach-horses, which, being old and stiff, did not overtake the fugitives till they were in their bed at Kilmarnock, where they stopped that night; but when they came back to the lady's in the morning, she was as cagey and meikle taken up<sup>1</sup> with them as if they had gotten her full consent and privilege to marry from the first. Thus was the first of Mrs Malcolm's children well and creditably settled. I have only now to conclude with observing that my son Gilbert was seized with the smallpox about the beginning of December, and was blinded by them for seventeen days; for the inoculation was not in practice yet among us, saving only in the genteel families that went into Edinburgh for the education of their children, where it was performed by the faculty there.

<sup>1</sup> *Cagey and meikle taken up.* Sportive and greatly taken up.



## CHAPTER XVI

YEAR 1775

*Captain Macadam provides a house and an annuity for old Mrs Malcolm—Miss Betty Wudrife brings from Edinburgh a new-fashioned silk mantle, but refuses to give the pattern to old Lady Macadam—Her revenge.*

THE regular course of nature is calm and orderly, and tempests and troubles are but lapses from the accustomed sobriety with which Providence works out the destined end of all things. From Yule till Pace-Monday there had been a gradual subsidence of our personal and parochial tribulations. The spring, though late, set in bright and beautiful, and was accompanied with the spirit of contentment; so that, excepting the great concern that we all began to take in the American rebellion, especially on account of Charles Malcolm that was in the man-of-war, and of Captain Macadam that had married Kate, we had throughout the better half of the year but little molestation of any sort. I should, however, note the upshot of the marriage.

By some cause that I do not recollect (if ever I had it properly told), the regiment wherein the captain had bought his commission was not sent to the plantations, but only over to Ireland, by which the captain and his lady were allowed to prolong their stay in the parish with his mother. And he, coming of age while he was among us, in making a settlement on his wife bought the house at the Braehead, which was then just built by Thomas Shivers, the mason; and he gave that house, with a judicious income, to Mrs Malcolm, telling her that it was not becoming, he having it in his power to do the contrary, that she should any longer be dependent on her own industry. For this the young man got a name like a sweet odour in all the country-side; but that whimsical and prelatie lady, his mother, just went out of all bounds, and played such pranks, for an old woman, as cannot be told. To her daughter-in-law, however, she was wonderful kind; and in fitting her out for going with the captain to Dublin it was extraordinary to hear what a paraphernalia she provided her with. But who could have thought that in this kindness a sore trial was brewing for me!

It happened that Miss Betty Wudrife, the daughter of an heritor, had been on a visit to some of her friends in Edinburgh; and, being in at Edinburgh, she came out with a fine mantle, decked and adorned with many a ribbon-knot, such as had never been seen in the parish. The

Lady Macadam, hearing of this grand mantle, sent to beg Miss Betty to lend it to her, to make a copy for young Mrs Macadam. But Miss Betty was so vogie<sup>1</sup> with her gay mantle that she sent back word, it would be making it o'er common; which so nettled the old courtly lady that she vowed revenge, and said the mantle would not be long seen on Miss Betty. Nobody knew the meaning of her words; but she sent privately for Miss Sabrina, the schoolmistress, who was aye proud of being invited to my lady's, where she went on the Sabbath night to drink tea, and to read Thomson's *Seasons* and Hervey's *Meditations* for her ladyship's recreation. Between the two a secret plot was laid against Miss Betty and her Edinburgh mantle; and Miss Sabrina, in a very treacherous manner, for the which I afterwards chided her severely, went to Miss Betty, and got a sight of the mantle, and how it was made, and all about it, until she was in a capacity to make another like it; by which my lady and she, from old silk and satin negligées which her ladyship had worn at the French court, made up two mantles of the self-same fashion as Miss Betty's, and, if possible, more sumptuously garnished, but in a flagrant fool way. On the Sunday morning after, her ladyship sent for Jenny Gaffaw, and her daft daughter Meg, and showed them the mantles, and said she would give them half-a-crown if they would go with them to the

<sup>1</sup> *Vogie*. Vain.



*"Every eye in the Kirk was now on them."*



kirk, and take their place in the bench beside the elders, and, after worship, walk home before Miss Betty Wudrife. The two poor natural things were just transported with the sight of such bravery, and needed no other bribe; so, over their bits of ragged duds,<sup>1</sup> they put on the pageantry, and walked away to the kirk like peacocks, and took their place on the bench, to the great diversion of the whole congregation.

I had no suspicion of this, and had prepared an affecting discourse about the horrors of war, in which I touched, with a tender hand, on the troubles that threatened families and kindred in America; but all the time I was preaching, doing my best, and expatiating till the tears came into my eyes, I could not divine what was the cause of the inattention of my people. For the two vain haverels<sup>2</sup> were on the bench under me, and I could not see them; and there they sat, spreading their feathers and picking their wings, stroking down and setting right their finery, with such an air as no living soul could see and withstand, while every eye in the kirk was now on them, and now on Miss Betty Wudrife, who was in a worse situation than if she had been on the stool of repentance.

Greatly grieved with the little heed that was paid to my discourse, I left the pulpit with a heavy heart. But when I came out into the kirk-

<sup>1</sup> *Ragged duds.* Literally, ragged rags.

<sup>2</sup> *Haverels.* Chattering, half-witted folk.

yard, and saw the two antics,—linking like ladies, and aye keeping in the way before Miss Betty, and looking back and around in their pride and admiration, with high heads and a wonderful pomp—, I was really overcome, and could not keep my gravity, and laughed loud out among the graves, and in the face of all my people ; who, seeing how I was vanquished in that unguarded moment by my enemy, made a universal and most unreverent breach of all decorum, at which Miss Betty, who had been the cause of all, ran into the first open door, and almost fainted away with mortification.

This affair was regarded by the elders as a sinful trespass on the orderliness that was needful in the Lord's house ; and they called on me at the manse that night, and said it would be a guilty connivance if I did not rebuke and admonish Lady Macadam of the evil of her way ;—for they had questioned daft Jenny, and had got at the bottom of the whole plot and mischief. I, who knew her ladyship's light way, would fain have had the elders to overlook it rather than expose myself to her tantrums ; but they considered the thing as a great scandal, so that I was obligated to conform to their wishes. I might have as well stayed at home, however, for her ladyship was in one of her jocose humours when I went to speak to her on the subject, and it was so far from my power to make a proper impression on her of the enormity that had been committed that she made me laugh, in spite of my reason, at



the fantastical drollery of her malicious prank on Miss Betty Wudrife.

It did not end here, however; for the Session, knowing that it was profitless to speak to the daft mother and daughter, who had been the instruments, gave orders to Willy Howking, the bethe-ral, not to let them again so far into the kirk; and Willy, having scarcely more sense than them both, thought proper to keep them out next Sunday altogether. The twa said nothing at the time; but the adversary was busy with them, for, on the Wednesday following, there being a meeting of the synod at Ayr, to my utter amazement the mother and daughter made their appearance there in all their finery, and raised a complaint against me and the Session for debarring them from church privileges. No stage play could have produced such an effect. I was perfectly dum-founded; and every member of the synod might have been tied with a straw, they were so overcome with this new device of that endless woman, (when bent on provocation), the Lady Macadam. In her the saying was verified, Old folk are twice bairns; for in such plays, pranks, and projects, she was as playrife as a very lassie at her sampler; and this is but a swatch<sup>1</sup> to what lengths she would go. The complaint was dismissed; by which the Session and me were assoilzied. But I'll never forget till the day of my death what I suffered on that occasion,—to be so put to the wall by two born idiots!

<sup>1</sup> *Swatch.* Sample.

## CHAPTER XVII

YEAR 1776

*A recruiting party comes to Irville—Thomas Wilson and some others enlist—Charles Malcolm's return.*

IT belongs to the chroniclers of the realm to describe the damage and detriment that fell on the power and prosperity of the kingdom by reason of the rebellion, which was fired into open war, against the name and authority of the king in the plantations of America; my task is to describe what happened within the narrow bound of the pasturage of the Lord's flock, of which, in His bounty and mercy, He made me the humble, willing, but, alas! the weak and ineffectual, shepherd.

About the month of February a recruiting party came to our neighbour town of Irville, to beat up for men to be soldiers against the rebels; and thus the battle was brought, as it were, to our gates, for the very first man that took on with them was one Thomas Wilson, a cottar in our clachan, who, up to that time, had been a decent

and creditable character. He was at first a farmer lad, but had forgathered with a doited tawpy,<sup>1</sup> whom he married, and had offspring three or four. For some time it was noticed that he had a down and thoughtful look, that his cleeding<sup>2</sup> was growing bare, and that his wife kept an untrig house, which, it was feared by many, was the cause of Thomas going o'er often to the change-house: he was, in short, during the greater part of the winter, evidently a man foregone in the pleasures of this world, which made all that knew him compassionate his situation.

No doubt, it was his household ills that burdened him past bearing and made him go into Irville when he heard of the recruiting, and take on to be a soldier. Such a wally-wallying as the news of this caused at every door; for the red coats, (from the persecuting days, when the black-cuffs rampaged through the country), soldiers that fought for hire, were held in dread and as a horror among us, and terrible were the stories that were told of their cruelty and sinfulness; indeed, there had not been wanting in our own time a sample of what they were, as witness the murder of Jean Glaikit by Patrick O'Neil, the Irish corporal, anent which I have treated at large in the memorables of the year 1774.

A meeting of the Session was forthwith held, for here was Thomas Wilson's wife and all his weans,

<sup>1</sup> *Doited tawpy.* Slovenly, senseless woman.

<sup>2</sup> *Cleeding.* Clothing.

an awful cess, thrown upon the parish—; and it was settled outright among us that Mr Docken, (who was then an elder, but is since dead), a worthy man, with a soft tongue and a pleasing manner, should go to Irville, and get Thomas, if possible, released from the recruiters. But it was all in vain. The sergeant would not listen to him, for Thomas was a strapping lad; nor would the poor infatuated man himself agree to go back, but cursed like a cadger, and swore that, if he stayed any longer among his plagues, he would commit some rash act. So we were saddled with his family, which was the first taste and preeing<sup>1</sup> of what war is when it comes into our hearths, and among the breadwinners.

The evil, however, did not stop here. Thomas, when he was dressed out in the king's clothes, came over to see his bairns, and take a farewell of his friends; and he looked so gallant that the very next market-day another lad of the parish 'listed with him. But he was a ramplor,<sup>2</sup> roving sort of a creature, and, upon the whole, it was thought he did well for the parish when he went to serve the king.

The 'listing was a catching distemper. Before the summer was over, three other of the farming lads went off with the drum, and there was a wailing in the parish, which made me preach a touching discourse. I likened the parish to a widow woman and a small family, sitting in their

<sup>1</sup> *Preeing.* Proof.

<sup>2</sup> *Ramplor.* Gay, unsettled.

cottage by the fireside: herself spinning with an eident<sup>1</sup> wheel, ettling her best to get them a bit and a brat;<sup>2</sup> and the poor weans all canty<sup>3</sup> about the hearthstane,—the little ones at their playocks,<sup>4</sup> and the elder at their tasks, the callans working with hooks and lines to catch them a meal of fish in the morning, and the lassies working stockings to sell at the next Marymas fair. Then I likened war to a calamity coming among them: the callans drowned at their fishing; the lassies led to a misdoing; and the feckless wee bairns laid on the bed of sickness; and their poor forlorn mother sitting by herself at the embers of a cauldribe fire,—her tow done, and no a bodle<sup>5</sup> to buy more,—dropping a silent and salt tear for her babies, and thinking of days that were gone, and, like Rachel weeping for her children, would not be comforted. With this I concluded, for my own heart filled full with the thought. And there was a deep sob in the church: verily, it was Rachel weeping for her children.

In the latter end of the year, the man-of-war, with Charles Malcolm in her, came to the Tail of the Bank at Greenock, to press men as it was thought, and Charles got leave from his captain to come and see his mother; and he brought with him Mr Howard, another midshipman, the

<sup>1</sup> *Eident*. Diligent.

<sup>2</sup> *Ettling* . . . *a bit and a brat*. Attempting her best . . . food and clothing.

<sup>3</sup> *Canty*. Cheerful.

<sup>4</sup> *Playocks*. Playthings.

<sup>5</sup> *Bodle*. Two pennies Scots.

son of a great parliament man in London : which, as we had tasted the sorrow, gave us some insight into the pomp of war. Charles was now grown up into a fine young man,—rattling, light-hearted, and just a cordial of gladness,—and his companion was every bit like him. They were dressed in their fine gold-laced garbs ; and nobody knew Charles when he came to the clachan, but all wondered, for they were on horseback, and rode to the house where his mother lived when he went away, which was then occupied by Miss Sabrina and her school. Miss Sabrina had never seen Charles ; but she had heard of him, and, when he inquired for his mother, she guessed who he was, and showed him the way to the new house that the captain had bought for her.

Miss Sabrina, who was a little overly perjink<sup>1</sup> at times, behaved herself on this occasion with a true spirit, and gave her lassies the play immediately ; so that the news of Charles's return was spread by them like wildfire, and there was a wonderful joy in the whole town. When Charles had seen his mother, and his sister Effie, with that douce and well-mannered lad William, his brother, (for of their meeting I cannot speak, not being present), he came with his friend to see me at the manse, and was most jocose with me, and, in a way of great pleasance, got Mrs Balwhidder to ask his friend to sleep at the manse. In short,

<sup>1</sup> *Perjink*. Rigid in her regard for rules.



we had just a ploy<sup>1</sup> the whole two days they stayed with us; and I got leave from Lord Eaglesham's steward to let them shoot on my lord's land, and I believe every laddie wean in the parish attended them to the field. As for old Lady Macadam: Charles being, as she said, a near relation, and she having likewise some knowledge of his comrade's family, she was just in her element with them, though they were but youths; for she was a woman naturally of a fantastical, and, as I have narrated, given to comical devices and pranks to a degree. She made for them a ball, to which she invited all the bonniest lasses, far and near, in the parish, and was out of the body with mirth, and had a fiddler from Irville; and it was thought by those that were there that, had she not been crippled with the rheumatics, she would have danced herself. But I was concerned to hear both Charles and his friend, like hungry hawks, rejoicing at the prospect of the war, hoping thereby, as soon as their midship term was out, to be made lieutenants. Saving this, there was no allay in the happiness they brought with them to the parish, and it was a delight to see how auld and young of all degrees made of Charles. For we were proud of him; and none more than myself, though he began to take liberties with me, calling me old governor: it was, however, in a warm-hearted manner, only I did not like

<sup>1</sup> *A ploy.* A merry time of it.



it when any of the elders heard. As for his mother, she deported herself like a saint on the occasion. There was a temperance in the pleasure of her heart, and in her thankfulness, that is past the compass of words to describe. Even Lady Macadam, who never could think a serious thought all her days, said, in her wild way, that the gods had bestowed more care in the making of Mrs Malcolm's temper than on the bodies and souls of all the saints in the calendar. On the Sunday, the strangers attended divine worship, and I preached a sermon purposely for them, and enlarged at great length and fulness on how David overcame Goliath. They both told me that they had never heard such a good discourse ; but I do not think they were great judges of preachings. How, indeed, could Mr Howard know anything of sound doctrine, being educated, as he told me, at Eton school, a prelatie establishment ! Nevertheless, he was a fine lad ; and, though a little given to frolic and diversion, he had a principle of integrity that afterwards kythed into much virtue. For, during this visit, he took a notion of Effie Malcolm, (and the lassie of him), then a sprightly and blooming creature, fair to look upon, and blithe to see ; and he kept up a correspondence with her till the war was over, when, being a captain of a frigate, he came down among us, and they were married by me, as shall be related in its proper place.

## CHAPTER XVIII

YEAR 1777

*Old Widow Mirkland—Bloody accounts of the war—He gets a newspaper—Great flood.*

THIS may well be called the year of the heavy heart, for we had sad tidings of the lads that went away as soldiers to America. First, there was a boding in the minds of all their friends that they were never to see them more; and their sadness, like a mist spreading from the waters and covering the fields, darkened the spirit of the neighbours. Secondly, a sound was bruited about that the king's forces would have a hot and a sore struggle before the rebels were put down, if they were ever put down. Then came the cruel truth of all that the poor lads' friends had feared. But it is fit and proper that I should relate at length, under their several heads, the sorrows and afflictions as they came to pass.

One evening, as I was taking my walk alone, meditating my discourse for the next Sabbath—it was shortly after Candlemas, and a fine, clear,

frosty evening, just as the sun was setting;—taking my walk alone, and thinking of the dreadfulfulness of Almighty power, and how that, if it was not tempered and restrained by infinite goodness, and wisdom, and mercy, the miserable sinner, man, and all things that live, would be in a woeful state, I drew near the beild<sup>1</sup> where old Widow Mirkland lived by herself, who was grandmother to Jock Hempy, the ramplor lad, that was the second who took on for a soldier. I did not mind of this at the time; but, passing the house, I heard the croon,<sup>2</sup> as it were, of a laden soul busy with the Lord, and, not to disturb the holy workings of grace, I paused and listened. It was old Mizy Mirkland herself, sitting at the gable of the house, looking at the sun setting in all his glory behind the Arran hills; but she was not praying—only moaning to herself: an oozing out, as it might be called, of the spirit from her heart, then grievously oppressed with sorrow, and heavy bodements of grey hairs and poverty.

“Yonder it slips awa’,” she was saying, “and my poor bairn, that’s o’er the seas in America, is maybe looking on its bright face, thinking of his hame, and aiblins<sup>3</sup> of me that did my best to breed him up in the fear of the Lord. But I couldna warsle wi’ what was ordained. Ay, Jock! as ye look at the sun gaun down, as, many a time,

<sup>1</sup> *Beild.* Dwelling.

<sup>2</sup> *Croon.* Hum.

<sup>3</sup> *Aiblins.* Perhaps.

when ye were a wee innocent laddie at my knee here, I hae bade ye look at him as a type of your Maker, ye will hae a sore heart; for ye hae left me in my need, when ye should hae been near at hand to help me for the hard labour and industry with which I brought you up. But it's the Lord's will. Blessed be the name of the Lord, that makes us to thole the tribulations of this world, and will reward us, through the mediation of Jesus, hereafter."

She wept bitterly as she said this, for her heart was tried; but the blessing of a religious contentment was shed upon her. I stepped up to her and asked about her concerns, for, saving as a parishioner, and a decent old woman, I knew little of her. Brief was her story; but it was one of misfortune.

"But I will not complain," she said, "of the measure that has been meted unto me. I was left myself an orphan; when I grew up and was married to my gudeman, I had known but scant and want. Our days of felicity were few; and he was ta'en awa' from me shortly after my Mary was born: 'a wailing baby and a widow's heart was a' he left me. I nursed her with my salt tears, and bred her in straits; but the favour of God was with us, and she grew up to womanhood as lovely as the rose, and as blameless as the lily. In her time she was married to a farming lad. There never was a brawer pair in the kirk than on that day when they gaed there first as man and

wife. My heart was proud ; and it pleased the Lord to chastise my pride, to nip my happiness, even in the bud. The very next day he got his arm crushed. It never got well again ; and he fell into a decay, and died in the winter, leaving my Mary far on in the road to be a mother.

“When her time drew near, we both happened to be working in the yard. She was delving to plant potatoes, and I told her it would do her hurt ; but she was eager to provide something (as she said) for what might happen. Oh ! it was an ill-omened word. The same night her trouble came on, and before the morning she was a cauld corpse, and another wee, wee, fatherless baby was greeting at my bosom :—it was him that’s noo awa’ in America. He grew up to be a fine bairn, with a warm heart, but a light head, and, wanting the rein of a father’s power upon him, was no sae douce<sup>1</sup> as I could have wished. But he was no man’s foe save his own. I thought and hoped that, as he grew to years of discretion, he would have sobered, and been a consolation to my old age ; but he’s gone, and he’ll never come back. Disappointment is my portion in this world, and I have no hope. While I can do, I will seek no help ; but threescore and fifteen can do little, and a small ail is a great evil to an aged woman, who has but the distaff for her breadwinner.”

I did all that I could to bid her be of good cheer ; but the comfort of a hopeful spirit was

<sup>1</sup> *Douce.* Steady.

dead within her, and she told me that by many tokens she was assured her bairn was already slain. "Thrice," said she, "I have seen his wraith: the first time he was in the pride of his young manhood; the next, he was pale and wan, with a bloody and a gashy wound in his side; and the third time there was a smoke, and, when it cleared away, I saw him in a grave, with neither winding-sheet nor coffin."

The tale of this pious and resigned spirit dwelt in mine ear, and, when I went home, Mrs Balwhidder thought that I had met with an o'ercome, and was very uneasy; so she got the tea soon ready to make me better. But scarcely had we tasted the first cup when a loud lamentation was heard in the kitchen. This was from that tawpy, the wife of Thomas Wilson, with her three weans. They had been seeking their meat among the farmer houses, and, in coming home, forgathered on the road with the Glasgow carrier, who told them that news had come, in the London Gazette, of a battle, in which the regiment that Thomas had listed in was engaged and had suffered loss both in rank and file. None doubting that their head was in the number of the slain, the whole family grat aloud, and came to the manse, bewailing him as no more; and it afterwards turned out to be the case, making it plain to me that there is a far-seeing discernment in the spirit that reaches beyond the scope of our incarnate senses.



But the weight of the war did not end with these afflictions ; for, instead of the sorrow that the listing caused, and the anxiety after, and the grief of the bloody tidings, operating as wholesome admonition to our young men, the natural perversity of the human heart was more and more manifested. A wonderful interest was raised among us all to hear of what was going on in the world ; insomuch that I myself was no longer contented with the relation of the news of the month in the Scots Magazine, but joined with my father-in-law, Mr Kibbock, to get a newspaper twice a week from Edinburgh. As for Lady Macadam : being naturally an impatient woman, she had one sent to her three times a week from London ; so that we had something fresh five times every week. The old papers were lent out to the families who had friends in the wars. This was done on my suggestion, hoping it would make all content with their peaceable lot ; but dominion for a time had been given to the power of contrariness, and it had quite an opposite effect. It begot a curiosity, egging on to enterprise ; and, greatly to my sorrow, three of the brawest lads in the parish, (or in any parish), all in one day took on with a party of the Scots Greys that were then lying in Ayr ; and nothing would satisfy the callans at Mr Lorimore's school but, instead of their innocent plays with girs,<sup>1</sup> and shinties, and sicklike, they must go ranking like soldiers, and fight sham-

<sup>1</sup> *Girs.* Hoops.



fighths in bodies. In short, things grew to a perfect hostility : a swarm of weans came out from the schools of Irville on a Saturday afternoon, and, forgathering with ours, had a battle with stones on the toll-road, such as was dreadful to hear of ; for many a one got a mark that day he will take to the grave with him.

It was not by accidents of the field only, however, that we were afflicted : those of the flood, too, were sent likewise against us. In the month of October, when the corn was yet in the holms<sup>1</sup> and on the cold land by the river-side, the water of Irville swelled to a great spait,<sup>2</sup> from bank to brae, sweeping all before it, and roaring in its might like an agent of divine displeasure sent forth to punish the inhabitants of the earth. The loss of the victual was a thing reparable, and those that suffered did not greatly complain, for, in other respects, their harvest had been plenteous. But the river, in its fury, not content with overflowing the lands, burst through the sandy hills, with a raging force, and a riving asunder of the solid ground, as when the fountains of the great deep were broken up. All in the parish were a-foot, and on the hills, some weeping and wringing their hands (not knowing what would happen) when they beheld the landmarks of the waters deserted, and the river breaking away through the country, like the war-horse set loose in his pasture, and glorying in his might. By this change in the way

<sup>1</sup> *Holms.* Low-grounds.

<sup>2</sup> *Spait.* Flood.

and channel of the river, all the mills in our parish were left more than half a mile from dam or lade,<sup>1</sup> and the farmers through the whole winter, till the new mills were built, had to travel through a heavy road with their victual. This was a great grievance, and added not a little to the afflictions of this unhappy year, which to me were not without a particularity, by the death of a full cousin of Mrs Balwhidder, my first wife. She was grievously burnt by looting<sup>2</sup> over a candle. Her mutch,<sup>3</sup> which was of the high structure then in vogue, took fire, and, being fastened with corking-pins to a great toupee, could not be got off until she had sustained a deadly injury, of which, after lingering long, she was kindly eased by her removal from trouble. This sore accident was to me a matter of deep concern and cogitation; but, as it happened in Tarbolton, and not in our parish, I have only alluded to it to show that, when my people were chastised by the hand of Providence, their pastor was not spared, but had a drop from the same vial.

<sup>1</sup> *Lade*. Mill-race.                      <sup>2</sup> *Looting*. Bending.

<sup>3</sup> *Mutch*. The common head-dress of women.

## CHAPTER XIX

YEAR 1778

*Revival of the smuggling trade—Bettie and Janet Pawkie, and Robin Bicker, an exciseman, come to the parish—Their doings—Robin is succeeded by Mungo Argyle—Lord Eaglesham assists William Malcolm.*

THIS year was as the shadow of the bygone : there was less actual suffering ; but what we came through cast a gloom among us, and we did not get up our spirits till the spring was far advanced. The corn was in the ear, and the sun far towards midsummer height, before there was any regular show of gladness in the parish.

It was clear to me that the wars were not to be soon over : I noticed that, in the course of this year, there was a greater christening of lad bairns than had ever been in any year during my incumbency ; and grave and wise persons, observant of the signs of the times, said that it had been long held as a sure prognostication of war when the births of male children outnumbered that of females.

Our chief misfortune in this year was a revival of that wicked mother of many mischiefs, the smuggling trade.<sup>1</sup> It concerned me greatly. But it was not allowed to it to make anything like a permanent stay among us; though in some of the neighbouring parishes its ravages, both in morals and property, were very distressing, and many a mailing<sup>2</sup> was sold to pay for the triumphs of the cutters and gaugers; for the government was by this time grown more eager, and the war caused the king's ships to be out and about, which increased the trouble of the smugglers, whose wits in their turn were thereby much sharpened.

After Mrs Malcolm, by the settlement of Captain Macadam, had given up her dealing, two maiden women, that were sisters, Betty and Janet Pawkie, came in among us from Ayr, where they had friends in league with some of the laigh land folk that carried on the contraband with the Isle of Man, which was the very eye of the smuggling. They took up the tea-selling, which Mrs Malcolm had dropped, and did business on a larger scale, having a general huxtry, with parliament-cakes,<sup>3</sup> and candles, and pincushions, as well as other groceries, in their window. Whether they had any contraband dealings, or were only backbitten, I cannot take it upon me to say; but it was

<sup>1</sup> Note B.

<sup>2</sup> *Mailing*. Farm.

<sup>3</sup> *Parliament-cakes*. Thin gingerbread cakes, vulgarly known as "parleys."

jealoused in the parish that the meal in the sacks that came to their door at night, and were sent to the Glasgow market in the morning, was not made of corn. They were, however, decent women, both sedate and orderly. The eldest, Betty Pawkie, was of a manly stature, and had a long beard, which made her have a coarse look ; but she was, nevertheless, a worthy, well-doing creature, and at her death she left ten pounds to the poor of the parish, as may be seen in the mortification board that the Session put up in the kirk as a testification and an example.

Shortly after the revival of the smuggling, an exciseman was put among us. The first was Robin Bicker, a very civil lad that had been a flunkey with Sir Hugh Montgomerie, when he was a residenter in Edinburgh, before the old Sir Hugh's death. He was a queer fellow, and had a coothy<sup>1</sup> way of getting in about folk, the which was very serviceable to him in his vocation. Nor was he overly gleg : but when a job was ill done, and he was obliged to notice it, he would often break out on the smugglers for being so stupid ; so that for an exciseman he was wonderful well liked, and did not object to a waught<sup>2</sup> of brandy at a time, when the auld wives ca'd it well-water. It happened, however, that some unneighbourly person sent him notice of a clecking of tea-chests, or brandy kegs, at which both Jenny and Betty Pawkie were the howdies ; and Robin could not

<sup>1</sup> *Coothy*. Affable.

<sup>2</sup> *Waught*. A great swig.

but enter their house. However, before going in, he just cried at the door to somebody on the road, so as to let the twa industrious lasses hear he was at hand. They were not slack in closing the trance-door,<sup>1</sup> and putting stoups and stools behind it, so as to cause trouble, and give time before anybody could get in. They then emptied their chaff-bed, and filled the tikeing with tea, and Betty went in on the top, covering herself with the blanket, and graining<sup>2</sup> like a woman in labour. It was thought that Robin Bicker himself would not have been overly particular in searching the house, considering there was a woman seemingly in the dead-thraws;<sup>3</sup> but a sorner,<sup>4</sup> an incomer from the east country, that hung about the change-house as a divor<sup>5</sup> hostler, and would rather gang a day's journey in the dark, than turn a spade in daylight, came to him as he stood at the door, and went in with him to see the sport. Robin, for some reason, could not bid him go away, and both Betty and Janet were sure he was in the plot against them. Indeed, it was always thought he was an informer; and no doubt he was something not canny, for he had a down look.

It was some time before the doorway was

<sup>1</sup> *Trance-door.* The *trance* was the passage inside a house, from which the kitchen was reached by the *trance-door*.

<sup>2</sup> *Graining.* Groaning.

<sup>3</sup> *Dead-thraws.* Pangs of death.

<sup>4</sup> *Sorner.* Habit and repute loafer.

<sup>5</sup> *Divor.* Ne'er-do-well.

cleared of the stoups and stools ; and Jenny was in great concern, and flustered, as she said, for her poor sister, who was taken with a heart-colic. "I'm sorry for her," said Robin ; "but I'll be as quiet as possible." And so he searched all the house, but found nothing ; at the which his companion, the divor east-country hostler, swore an oath that could not be misunderstood. Without more ado, but, as all thought, against the grain, Robin went up to sympathise with Betty in the bed, whose groans were loud and vehement. "Let me feel your pulse," said Robin ; and he looted down as she put forth her arm from aneath the clothes, and, laying his hand on the bed, cried, "Hey ! what's this ? This is a costly filling." Upon which Betty jumpet up quite recovered, and Jenny fell to the wailing and railing ; while the hostler from the east country took the bed of tea on his back, to carry it to the change-house, till a cart was gotten to take it into the custom-house at Irville.

Betty Pawkie, being thus suddenly cured, and grudging the loss of property, took a knife in her hand, and, as the divor was crossing the burn at the stepping-stones that lead to the back of the change-house, she ran after him and ripped up the tikeing, and sent all the tea floating away on the burn. And this was thought a brave action of Betty, and the story not a little helped to lighten our melancholy meditations.

Robin Bicker soon after this affair was removed



to another district, and we got in his place one Mungo Argyle, who was as proud as a provost, being come of Highland parentage. Black was the hour he came among my people, for he was needy and greedy, and rode on the top of his commission. Of all the manifold ills in the train of smuggling, surely the excisemen are the worst, and the setting of this rabiator<sup>1</sup> over us was a severe judgment for our sins. But he suffered for't; and peace be with him in the grave, where the wicked cease from troubling!

Willie Malcolm, the youngest son of his mother, had by this time learned all that Mr Lorimore, the schoolmaster, could teach. And as it was evidenced to everybody, by his mild manners and saintliness of demeanour, that he was a chosen vessel, his mother longed to fulfil his own wish (which was doubtless the natural working of the act of grace that had been shed upon him); but she had not the wherewithal to send him to the college of Glasgow, where he was desirous to study, and her just pride would not allow her to cress his brother-in-law, the Captain Macadam, who, I should now mention, was raised in the end of this year, as we read in the newspapers, to be a major. I thought her in this somewhat unreasonable,—for she would not be persuaded to let me write to the captain—; but, when I reflected on the good that Willie Malcolm might in time do as a preacher, I said nothing more to her, but indited

<sup>1</sup> *Rabiator*. Violent bully.

a letter to the Lord Eaglesham, setting forth the lad's parts, telling who he was and all about his mother's scruples. And, by the return of the post from London, his lordship sent me an order on his steward to pay me twenty pounds towards equipping my *protégé* (as he called Willie), with a promise to pay for his education; which was such a great thing for his lordship to do, off-hand on my recommendation, that it won him much affection throughout the country-side, and folk began to wonder, rehearsing the great things (as was said) that I had gotten my lord at different times and on divers occasions to do. And this had a vast of influence among my brethren of the presbytery, and they grew into a state of greater cordiality with me, looking on me as a man having authority; but I was none thereat lifted up, for, not being gifted with the power of a kirk-filling eloquence, I was but little sought for at sacraments, and fasts, and solemn days,—which was doubtless well ordained; for I had no motive to seek fame in foreign pulpits, but was left to walk in the paths of simplicity within my own parish. To eschew evil myself, and to teach others to do the same, I thought the main duties of the pastoral office, and with a sincere heart endeavoured what in me lay to perform them with meekness, sobriety, and a spirit wakeful to the inroads of sin and Satan. But oh! the sordidness of human nature! The kindness of the Lord Eaglesham's own disposition was ascribed to my

influence, and many a dry answer I was obliged to give to applicants that would have me trouble his lordship as if I had a claim upon him. In the ensuing year, the notion of my cordiality with him came to a great head, and brought about an event that could not have been forethought by me as a thing within the compass of possibility to bring to pass.

## CHAPTER XX

YEAR 1779

*He goes to Edinburgh to attend the General Assembly—Preaches before the Commissioner.*

I WAS named in this year for the General Assembly, and Mrs Balwhidder by her continual thrift having made our purse able to stand a shake against the wind, we resolved to go into Edinburgh in a creditable manner. Accordingly, in conjunct with Mrs Dalrymple, the lady of a major of that name, we hired the Irville chaise, and we put up in Glasgow at the Black Boy, where we stayed all night. Next morning, by seven o'clock, we got into the fly-coach for the capital of Scotland, which we reached after a heavy journey about the same hour in the evening. We put up at the public where it stopped till the next day, for really both me and Mrs Balwhidder were worn out with the undertaking, and found a cup of tea a vast refreshment.

Betimes in the morning, having taken our breakfast, we got a caddy<sup>1</sup> to guide us and our

<sup>1</sup> Note D.

wallise to Widow M'Vicar's, at the head of the Covenanters' Close. She was a relation to my first wife, Betty Lanshaw, my own full cousin that was, and we had advised her, by course of post, of our coming and intendment to lodge with her as uncos and strangers.<sup>1</sup> But Mrs M'Vicar kept a cloth shop, and sold plaidings and flannels, besides Yorkshire superfines, and was used to the sudden incoming of strangers, especially visitants, from both the West and the North Highlands, and was withal a gawsy, furthy woman,<sup>2</sup> taking great pleasure in hospitality, and every sort of kindness and discretion; and she would not allow of such a thing as our being lodgers in her house, but was so cagey to see us, and to have it in her power to be civil to a minister (as she was pleased to say) of such repute, that nothing less would content her but that we must live upon her, and partake of all the best that could be gotten for us within the walls of "the gude town."

When we found ourselves so comfortable, Mrs Balwhidder and me waited on my patron's family that was, the young ladies, and the laird, who had been my pupil, but was now an advocate high in the law. They likewise were kind. In short, everybody in Edinburgh was in a manner wearisome kind, and we could scarcely find time to see

<sup>1</sup> *As uncos and strangers.* As strangers, not related to Mrs M'Vicar, and, therefore, as paying guests.

<sup>2</sup> *Gawsy, furthy woman.* Buxom, frank woman.

the Castle and the palace of Holyrood House, and that more sanctified place where the Maccabeus of the Kirk of Scotland, John Knox, was wont to live.

Upon my introduction to his grace the Commissioner, I was delighted and surprised to find the Lord Eaglesham at the levee. And his lordship was so glad on seeing me that he made me more kenspeckle<sup>1</sup> than I could have wished to have been in his grace's presence; for, owing to the same, I was required to preach before his grace, (upon a jocose recommendation of his lordship), the which gave me great concern, and daunted me so that in the interim I was almost bereft of all peace and studious composure of mind. Fain would I have eschewed the honour that was thus thrust upon me; but both my wife and Mrs M'Vicar were just lifted out of themselves with the thought.

When the day came, I thought all things in this world were loosened from their hold, and the sure and steadfast earth itself grown coggly<sup>2</sup> beneath my feet, as I mounted the pulpit. With what sincerity I prayed for help that day! And never stood man more in need of it; for through all my prayer the congregation was so watchful and still, (doubtless, to note if my doctrine was orthodox), that the beating of my heart might have been heard to the uttermost corners of the kirk.

I had chosen as my text, from Second Samuel,

<sup>1</sup> *Kenspeckle.*    *Remarked.*    <sup>2</sup> *Grown coggly.*    *Rocking.*

xixth chapter and 35th verse, these words—*Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? Wherefore, then, should thy servant be yet a burden to the king?* And hardly had I with a trembling voice read the words, when I perceived an awful stir in the congregation,—for all applied the words to the state of the Church, and the appointment of his grace the Commissioner. Having paused after giving out the text, the same fearful and critical silence again ensued, and every eye was so fixed upon me that I was for a time deprived of courage to look about. But Heaven was pleased to compassionate my infirmity, and as I proceeded I began to warm as in my own pulpit. I described the gorgeous Babylonian harlot riding forth in her chariots of gold and silver, with trampling steeds and a hurricane of followers, drunk with the cup of abominations, all shouting with revelry, and glorying in her triumph, treading down in their career those precious pearls, the saints and martyrs, into the mire beneath their swinish feet. “Before her you may behold Wantonness playing the tinkling cymbal, Insolence beating the drum, and Pride blowing the trumpet. Every vice is there with his emblems; and the seller of pardons, with his crucifix and triple crown, is distributing his largess of perdition. The voices of men shout to set wide the gates, to give entrance to the queen of nations; and the gates are set wide, and they all enter. The avenging gates close on them: they are all shut up in hell.”



There was a sough in the kirk as I said these words; for the vision I described seemed to be passing before me as I spoke, and I felt as if I had witnessed the everlasting destruction of Antichrist and the worshippers of the Beast. But, soon recovering myself, I said in a soft and gentle manner, "Look at yon lovely creature in virgin-  
raiment, with the Bible in her hand. See how mildly she walks along, giving alms to the poor as she passes on towards the door of that lowly dwelling. Let us follow her in! She takes her seat in the chair at the bedside of the poor old dying sinner. And as he tosses in the height of penitence and despair she reads to him the promise of the Saviour, *This night thou shalt be with me in Paradise*; and he embraces her with transports, and, falling back on his pillow, calmly closes his eyes in peace. She is the true religion; and when I see what she can do even in the last moments of the guilty, well may we exclaim, when we think of the symbols and pageantry of the departed superstition, *Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?* No: let us cling to the simplicity of the Truth that is now established in our native land."

At the conclusion of this clause of my discourse, the congregation, which had been all so still and so solemn, never coughing, as was often the case among my people, gave a great rustle, changing their positions; by which I was almost overcome. However, I took heart and ventured on, and

pointed out that, with our Bible and an orthodox priesthood, we stood in no need of the king's authority, however bound we were, in temporal things, to respect it; and I showed this at some length, crying out, in the words of my text, *Wherefore, then, should thy servant be yet a burden to the king?* In the saying of which, I happened to turn my eyes towards his grace the Commissioner, as he sat on the throne, and I thought his countenance was troubled; which made me add, (that he might not think I meant him any offence), "That the King of the Church was one before whom the great, and the wise, and the good,—all doomed and sentenced convicts,—implore his mercy." "It is true," said I, "that in the days of his tribulation he was wounded for our iniquities, and died to save us; but, at his death, his greatness was proclaimed by the quick and the dead. There was sorrow, and there was wonder, and there was rage, and there was remorse; but there was no shame there: none blushed on that day at that sight but yon glorious luminary." The congregation rose, and looked round, as the sun that I pointed at shone in at the window. I was disconcerted by their movement; and my spirit was spent, so that I could say no more.

When I came down from the pulpit, there was a great pressing in of acquaintance and ministers, who lauded me exceedingly; but I thought it could be only in derision, and therefore I slipped home to Mrs M'Vicar's as fast as I could.

Mrs M·Vicar, who was a clever, hearing-all sort of a neighbour, said my sermon was greatly thought of, and that I had surprised everybody; but I was fearful there was something of jocularly at the bottom of this, for she was a flaunty woman, and liked well to give a good-humoured gibe or jeer. However, his grace the Commissioner was very thankful for the discourse, and complimented me on what he called my apostolical earnestness. But he was a courteous man, and I could not trust to him, especially as my Lord Eaglesham had told me in secrecy before,—it's true, it was in his gallanting way,—that, in speaking of the king's servant as I had done, I had rather gone beyond the bounds of modern moderation. Altogether, I found neither pleasure nor profit in what was thought so great an honour, but longed for the privacy of my own narrow pasture and little flock.

It was in this visit to Edinburgh that Mrs Balwhidder bought her silver teapot, and other ornamental articles; but this was not done, as she assured me, in a vain spirit of bravery, (which I could not have abided), but because it was well known that tea draws better in a silver pot, and drinks pleasanter in a china cup, than out of any other kind of cup or teapot.

By the time I got home to the manse, I had been three whole weeks and five days absent, which was more than all my absences together from the time of my placing; and my people

were glowing with satisfaction when they saw us driving in a Glasgow chaise through the clachan to the manse.

The rest of the year was merely a quiet succession of small incidents, none of which are worthy of notation, though they were all severally, no doubt, of aught<sup>1</sup> somewhere. For they took up both time and place in the coming to pass, and nothing comes to pass without helping onwards to some great end: each particular little thing that happens in the world being a seed sown by the hand of Providence to yield an increase, which increase is destined, in its turn, to minister to some higher purpose, until at last the issue affects the whole earth. There is nothing in all the world that doth not advance the cause of goodness: no, not even the sins of the wicked, though, through the dim casement of her mortal tabernacle, the soul of man cannot discern the method thereof.

<sup>1</sup> *Aught*. Consequence.

## CHAPTER XXI

YEAR 1780

*Lord George Gordon—Report of an illumination.*

THIS was, among ourselves, another year of few events. A sound, it is true, came among us of a design, on the part of the government in London, to bring back the old harlotry of papistry; but we spent our time in the lea of the hedge and the lown<sup>1</sup> of the hill. Some there were that a panic seized upon when they heard of Lord George Gordon, that zealous Protestant, being committed to the Tower; but for my part I had no terror upon me, for I saw all things around me going forward improving, and I said to myself, It is not so when Providence permits scathe and sorrow to fall upon a nation. Civil troubles, and the casting down of thrones, are always forewarned by want and poverty striking the people. What I have, therefore, chiefly to record as the memorables of this year, are things of small import:—the main of which are that some of the neighbouring lairds, taking example by Mr

<sup>1</sup> *Lown.* Shelter.

Kibbock, my father-in-law that was, began in this fall to plant the tops of their hills with mounts of fir-trees; and that Mungo Argyle, the exciseman, just herried the poor smugglers to death, and made a power of prize-money,—which, however, had not the wonted effect of riches, for it brought him no honour, and he lived in the parish like a leper, or any other kind of excommunicated person.

But I should not forget a most droll thing that took place with Jenny Gaffaw and her daughter. They had been missed from the parish for some days, and folk began to be uneasy about what could have become of the two silly creatures; till one night, at the dead hour, a strange light was seen beaming and burning at the window of the bit hole where they lived. It was first observed by Lady Macadam, who never went to bed at any Christian hour, but sat up reading her new French novels and play-books with Miss Sabrina, the schoolmistress. She gave the alarm, thinking that such a great and continuous light from a lone house, where never candle had been seen before, could be nothing less than the flame of a burning. And sending Miss Sabrina and the servants to see what was the matter, they beheld daft Jenny and her as daft daughter with a score of candle douns<sup>1</sup> (Heaven only knows where they got them!) placed in the window, and the twa fools dancing and linking and admiring before the door.

<sup>1</sup> *Candle douns.* Candle stumps.

“What’s all this about, Jenny?” said Miss Sabrina.

“Awa’ wi’ you, awa’ wi’ you, ye wicked pope, ye whore of Babylon : is na it for the glory of God, and the Protestant religion? D’ye think I will be a pope as long as light can put out darkness?” And with that the mother and daughter began again to leap and dance as madly as before.

It seems that poor Jenny, having heard of the luminations that were lighted up through the country on the ending of the Popish Bill, had, she and Meg, travelled by themselves into Glasgow, where they had gathered or begged a stock of candles, and coming back under the cloud of night, had surprised and alarmed the whole clachan by lighting up their window in the manner that I have described. Poor Miss Sabrina, at Jenny’s uncivil salutation, went back to my lady with her heart full, and would fain have had the idiots brought to task before the Session for what they had said to her. But I would not hear tell of such a thing ; for which Miss Sabrina owed me a grudge that was not soon given up. At the same time, I was grieved to see the testimonies of joyfulness for a holy victory brought into such disrepute by the ill-timed demonstrations of the two irreclaimable naturals, that had not a true conception of the cause for which they were triumphing.



## CHAPTER XXII

YEAR 1781

*Argyle, the exciseman, grows a gentleman—Lord Eaglesham's concubine—His death—The parish children afflicted with the measles.*

IF the two last years passed o'er the heads of me and my people without any manifest dolour,—which is a great thing to say for so long a period in this world,—we had our own trials and tribulations in the one of which I have now to make mention. Mungo Argyle, the exciseman, waxing rich, grew proud and petulant, and would have ruled the country-side with a rod of iron. Nothing less would serve him than a fine horse to ride on, and a world of other conveniences and luxuries, as if he had been on an equality with gentlemen. And he bought a grand gun, which was called a fowling-piece; and he had two pointer dogs the like of which had not been seen in the parish since the planting of the Eaglesham-wood on the moorland, which was four years before I got the call. Everybody said the man

was fey,<sup>1</sup> and truly, when I remarked him so gallant and gay on the Sabbath at the kirk, and noted his glowing face and gleg een, I thought at times there was something no canny<sup>1</sup> about him. It was indeed clear to be seen that the man was hurried out of himself; but nobody could have thought that the death he was to dree<sup>1</sup> would have been what it was.

About the end of summer my Lord Eaglesham came to the castle, bringing with him an English madam, that was his Miss. Some days after he came down from London, as he was riding past the manse, his lordship stopped to inquire for my health, and I went to the door to speak to him. I thought that he did not meet me with that blithe<sup>2</sup> countenance he was wont; and in going away he said with a blush, "I fear I dare not ask you to come to the castle." I had heard of his concubine, and I said, "In saying so, my lord, you show a spark of grace; for it would not become me to see what I have heard; and I am surprised, my lord, you will not rather take a

<sup>1</sup> *Fey*. *No canny*. *Dree*. One of the uses of *canny* is as applied to a person who is fortunate in a superstitious sense; and *no canny* denotes a negative condition. *To be fey* is to be predestined to *dree* or suffer an early death; to be *no canny* is to be under some such evil destiny.

<sup>2</sup> *Blithe*. The nice meaning may be gathered from these lines of Burns:

"I ha'e been blithe wi' comrades dear;  
I ha'e been merry drinkin';  
I ha'e been joyfu' gath'rin gear;  
I ha'e been happy thinkin'."

lady of your own." He looked kindly, but confused, saying he did not know where to get one ; so seeing his shame, and not wishing to put him out of conceit entirely with himself, I replied, "Na, na, my lord : there's nobody will believe that, for there never was a silly Jock, but there was as silly a Jenny;" at which he laughed heartily, and rode away. But I know not what was in't : I was troubled in mind about him, and thought, as he was riding away, that I would never see him again. And, sure enough, it so happened ; for the next day, being airing in his coach with Miss Spangle, the lady he had brought, he happened to see Mungo Argyle with his dogs and his gun, and, my lord being as particular about his game as the other was about boxes of tea and kegs of brandy, he jumped out of the carriage, and ran to take the gun. Words passed, and the exciseman shot my lord. Never shall I forget that day—such riding, such running, the whole country-side afoot—, and the same night my lord breathed his last, and the mad and wild reprobate that did the deed was taken up and sent off to Edinburgh. This was a woeful riddance of that oppressor, for my lord was a good landlord and a kind-hearted man, and, albeit though a little thoughtless, was aye ready to make his power, when the way was pointed out, minister to good works. The whole parish mourned for him, and there was not a sorer heart in all its bounds than my own. Never was such a sight seen as his burial : the whole country-

side was there, and all as solemn as if they had been assembled in the valley of Jehoshaphat in the latter day. The hedges where the funeral was to pass were clad with weans, like bunches of hips and haws, and the kirkyard was as if all its own dead were risen. Never, do I think, was such a multitude gathered together : some thought there could not be less than three thousand grown men, besides women and children.<sup>1</sup>

Scarcely was this great public calamity past, (for it could be reckoned no less), when one Saturday afternoon, as Miss Sabrina, the schoolmistress, was dining with Lady Macadam, her ladyship was stricken with the paralytics, and her face so thrown<sup>2</sup> in the course of a few minutes that Miss Sabrina came flying to the manse for the help and advice of Mrs Balwhidder. A doctor was gotten with all speed by express ; but her ladyship was smitten beyond the reach of medicine. She lived, however, some time after ; but oh ! she was such an object that it was a grief to see her. She could only mutter when she tried to speak, and was as helpless as a baby. Though she never liked me, and I could not say there were many things in her demeanour that pleased me, yet she was a free-handed woman to the needful, and when she died she was more missed than it was thought she could have been.

Shortly after her funeral, which was managed by a gentleman sent from her friends in Edinburgh,

<sup>1</sup> Note E.

<sup>2</sup> *Thrown.* Distorted.

to whom I wrote about her condition, the Major, her son, with his lady, Kate Malcolm, and two pretty bairns, came and stayed in her house for a time; and they were a great happiness to us all, in the way of both drinking tea, and sometimes taking a bit dinner, their only mother now, the worthy and pious Mrs Malcolm, being regularly of the company.

Before the end of the year, I should mention, the fortune of Mrs Malcolm's family got another shove upwards by the promotion of her second son, Robert Malcolm, who, being grown an expert and careful mariner, was made captain of a grand ship whereof Provost Maitland of Glasgow (that was kind to his mother in her distresses) was the owner. That douce lad Willie, her youngest son, who was at the university of Glasgow under the Lord Eaglesham's patronage, was like to have suffered a blight. However, Major Macadam, when I spoke to him anent the young man's loss of his patron, said, with a pleasant generosity, he should not be stickit; and, accordingly, he made up, as far as money could, for the loss of his lordship. But there was none that made up for the great power and influence which, I have no doubt, the Earl would have exerted in his behalf, when he was ripened for the Church. So that, although in time William came out a sound and heart-searching preacher, he was long obliged, like many another unfriended saint, to cultivate sand, and wash Ethiopians in the shape of an east

country gentleman's camstrairy<sup>1</sup> weans ;—than which, as he wrote me himself, there cannot be on earth a greater trial of temper. However, in the end he was rewarded, and is not only now a placed minister, but a doctor of divinity.

The death of Lady Macadam was followed by another parochial misfortune—for, considering the time when it happened, we could count it as nothing less. Auld Thomas Howkings, the betherel,<sup>2</sup> fell sick, and died in the course of a week's illness, about the end of November; and the measles coming at that time upon the parish, there was such a smashery<sup>3</sup> of the poor weans as had not been known for an age, insomuch that James Banes, the lad who was Thomas Howkings' helper, rose in open rebellion against the Session during his superior's illness, and we were constrained to augment his pay, and to promise him the place if Thomas did not recover, which it was then thought he could not do. On the day this happened there were three dead children in the clachan, and a panic and consternation spread about the burial of them when James Banes's insurrection was known; which made both me and the Session glad to hush up the affair, that the heart of the public might have no more than the sufferings of individuals to hurt it.

Thus ended a year, on many accounts heavy to be remembered.

<sup>1</sup> *Camstrairy*. Unmanageable.    <sup>2</sup> *Betherel*. Beadle.

<sup>3</sup> *Smashery*. A hewing down.

## CHAPTER XXIII

YEAR 1782

*News of the victory over the French fleet—He has to inform Mrs Malcolm of the death of her son Charles in the engagement.*

ALTHOUGH I have not been particular in noticing it, from time to time, there had been an occasional going off, at fairs and on market-days, of the lads of the parish as soldiers, and when Captain Malcolm got the command of his ship, no less than four young men sailed with him from the clachan; so that we were deeper and deeper interested in the proceedings of the doleful war that was raging in the plantations. By one post we heard of no less than three brave fellows belonging to us being slain in one battle, for which there was a loud and general lamentation.

Shortly after this, I got a letter from Charles Malcolm. A very pretty letter it indeed was: he had heard of my Lord Eaglesham's murder, and grieved for the loss, both because his lordship was a good man, and because he had been such



a friend to him and his family. "But," said Charles, "the best way that I can show my gratitude for his patronage is to prove myself a good officer to my king and country." Which I thought a brave sentiment, and was pleased; for, somehow, Charles, from the time he brought me the limes to make a bowl of punch, in his pocket from Jamaica, had built a nest of affection in my heart. But, oh! the wicked wastry of life in war. In less than a month after, the news came of a victory over the French fleet, and by the same post I got a letter from Mr Howard, that was the midshipman who came to see us with Charles, telling me that poor Charles had been mortally wounded in the action, and had afterwards died of his wounds. "He was a hero in the engagement," said Mr Howard, "and he died as a good and a brave man should." These tidings gave me one of the sorest hearts I ever suffered, and it was long before I could gather fortitude to disclose the tidings to poor Charles's mother. But the callants of the school had heard of the victory, and were going shouting about, and had set the steeple bell a-ringing. By this Mrs Malcolm heard the news; and, knowing that Charles's ship was with the fleet, she came over to the manse in great anxiety to hear the particulars, somebody telling her that there had been a foreign letter to me by the postman.

When I saw her I could not speak, but looked at her in pity, and the tear fleeing up into my

eyes, she guessed what had happened. After giving a deep and sore sigh, she inquired, "How did he behave? I hope, well; for he was aye a gallant laddie!"—and then she wept very bitterly. However, growing calmer, I read to her the letter; and when I had done she begged me to give it to her to keep, saying, "It's all that I have now left of my pretty boy; but it's mair precious to me than the wealth of the Indies;" and she begged me to return thanks to the Lord for all the comforts and manifold mercies with which her lot had been blessed, since the hour she put her trust in him alone,—and that was when she was left a penniless widow, with her five fatherless bairns.

It was just an edification of the spirit to see the Christian resignation of this worthy woman. Mrs Balwhidder was confounded, and said there was more sorrow in seeing the deep grief of her fortitude than tongue could tell.

Having taken a glass of wine with her, I walked out to conduct her to her own house; but in the way we met with a severe trial. All the weans were out parading with napkins and kail-blades<sup>1</sup> on sticks, rejoicing and triumphing in the glad tidings of victory. But when they saw me and Mrs Malcolm coming slowly along, they guessed what had happened, and threw away their banners of joy, and, standing all up in a row, with silence and sadness, along the kirkyard wall as we passed,

<sup>1</sup> *Kail-blades.* Cabbage leaves.

showed an instinct of compassion that penetrated to my very soul. The poor mother burst into fresh affliction, and some of the bairns into an audible weeping ; and, taking one another by the hand, they followed us to her door, like mourners at a funeral. Never was such a sight seen in any town before. The neighbours came to look at it as we walked along, and the men turned aside to hide their faces, while the mothers pressed their babies fondlier to their bosoms, and watered their innocent faces with their tears.

I prepared a suitable sermon, taking as the words of my text, *Howl, ye ships of Tarshish, for your strength is laid waste.* But when I saw around me so many of my people clad in complimentary mourning for the gallant Charles Malcolm, and that even poor daft Jenny Gaffaw and her daughter had on an old black riband ; and when I thought of him, the spirited laddie, coming home from Jamaica with his parrot on his shoulder, and his limes for me :—my heart filled full, and I was obliged to sit down in the pulpit and drop a tear.

After a pause, and the Lord having vouchsafed to compose me, I rose up, and gave out that anthem of triumph, the 124th Psalm, the singing of which brought the congregation round to themselves. But still I felt that I could not preach as I meant to do ; therefore, I only said a few words of prayer, and, singing another psalm, dismissed the congregation.

## CHAPTER XXIV

YEAR 1783

*Janet Gaffaw's death and burial.*

THIS was another Sabbath year of my ministry. It has left me nothing to record but a silent increase of prosperity in the parish. I myself had now in the bank more than a thousand pounds, and everything was thriving around. My two bairns: Gilbert, that is now the merchant in Glasgow, was grown into a sturdy, ramplor laddie, and Janet, that is married upon Dr Kittleword, the minister of Swappington, was as fine a lassie for her years as the eye of a parent could desire to see.

Shortly after the news of the peace, an event at which all gave themselves up to joy, a thing happened among us that at the time caused much talk, but, although very dreadful, was yet not so serious, somehow or other, as such an awsome doing should have been. Poor Jenny Gaffaw happened to take a heavy cold, and soon thereafter died. Meg went about from house to house begging dead-clothes, and got the body straightened

in a wonderful decent manner, with a plate of earth and salt placed upon it—an admonitory type of mortality and eternal life that has ill-advisedly gone out of fashion. When I heard of this, I could not but go to see how a creature that was not thought possessed of a grain of understanding could have done so much herself. On entering the door, I beheld Meg sitting with two or three of the neighbouring kimmers,<sup>1</sup> and the corpse laid out on a bed.

“Come awa’, sir,” said Meg. “This is an altered house : they’re gane that keepit it bein ;<sup>2</sup> but, sir, we maun a’ come to this, we maun pay the debt o’ nature. Death is a grim creditor, and a doctor but brittle bail when the hour of reckoning’s at han’ ! What a pity it is, mother, that you’re now dead, for here’s the minister come to see you. Oh, sir ! but she would have had a proud heart to see you in her dwelling, for she had a genteel turn, and would not let me, her only daughter, mess or mell<sup>3</sup> wi’ the lathron lasses of the clachan. Ay, ay : she brought me up with care, and edicated me for a lady : nae coarse wark darkened my lily-white hands. But I maun work now ; I maun dree the penalty of man.”

Having stopped some time, listening to the curious maunnering<sup>4</sup> of Meg, I rose to come away ; but she laid her hand on my arm, saying,

<sup>1</sup> *Kimmers.* Gossips.

<sup>2</sup> *Bein.* In provision.

<sup>3</sup> *Mess or mell.* Keep company with.

<sup>4</sup> *Maunnering.* Incoherent murmurings of complaint.

“No, sir, ye maun taste before ye gang! My mother had aye plenty in her life, nor shall her latter day be needy.”

Accordingly, Meg, with all the due formality common on such occasions,<sup>1</sup> produced a bottle of water, and a dram-glass, which she filled and tasted, then presented to me, at the same time offering me a bit of bread on a slate. It was a consternation to everybody how the daft creature had learnt all the ceremonies, which she performed in a manner past the power of pen to describe, making the solemnity of death, by her strange mockery, a kind of merriment that was more painful than sorrow. But some spirits are gifted with a faculty of observation that, by the strength of a little fancy, enables them to make a wonderful and truthlike semblance of things and events which they never saw; and poor Meg seemed to have this gift.

The same night, the Session having provided a coffin, the body was put in, and removed to Mr Mutchkin's brewhouse, where the lads and lasses kept the late-wake.

Saving this, the year flowed in a calm, and we floated on in the stream of time towards the great ocean of eternity, like ducks and geese in the river's tide that are carried down without being sensible of the speed of the current. Alas! we have not wings like them to fly back to the place we set out from.

<sup>1</sup> Note A. *Burials.*

## CHAPTER XXV

YEAR 1784

*A year of sunshine and pleasantness.*

I HAVE ever thought that this was a bright year, truly an Ann. Dom., for in it many of the lads came home that had listed to be soldiers; and Mr Howard, that was the midshipman, being now a captain of a man-of-war, came down from England and married Effie Malcolm, and took her up with him to London, where she wrote to her mother that she found his family people of great note, and more kind to her than she could write. By this time, also, Major Macadam was made a colonel, and lived with his lady in Edinburgh, where they were much respected by the genteeler classes, Mrs Macadam being considered a great unco<sup>1</sup> among them for all manner of ladylike ornaments,—she having been taught every sort of perfection in that way by the old lady, who was educated at the court of France, and was, from her birth, a person of quality. In this year, also, Captain Malcolm, her brother, married a

<sup>1</sup> *Unco*. Wonder.



daughter of a Glasgow merchant. So that Mrs Malcolm, in her declining years, had the prospect of a bright setting; but nothing could change the sober Christianity of her settled mind; and although she was strongly invited, by both the Macadams and the Howards, to see their felicity, she ever declined the same, saying: "No! I have been long out of the world, or, rather, I have never been in it: my ways are not as theirs; and (although I ken their hearts would be glad to be kind to me) I might fash<sup>1</sup> their servants, or their friends might think me unlike other folk, by which, instead of causing pleasure, mortification might ensue. So I will remain in my own house, trusting that, when they can spare the time, they will come and see me."

There was a spirit of true wisdom in this resolution, for it required a forbearance that in weaker minds would have relaxed. But, though a person of a most slender and delicate frame of body, she was a Judith in fortitude; and in all the fortune that seemed now smiling upon her she never was lifted up, but bore always that pale and meek look which gave a saintliness to her endeavours in the days of her suffering and poverty.

But when we enjoy most, we have least to tell. I look back on this year as on a sunny spot in the valley, amidst the shadows of the clouds of time; and I have nothing to record save the remembrance

<sup>1</sup> *Fash*. Trouble.

of welcomings and weddings, and a meeting of bairns and parents that the wars and the waters had long raged between. Contentment within the bosom lent a livelier grace to the countenance of Nature; and everybody said that in this year the hedges were greener than common, the gowans<sup>1</sup> brighter on the brae, and the heads of the statelier trees adorned with a richer coronal of leaves and blossoms. All things were animated with the gladness of thankfulness, and testified to the goodness of their Maker.

<sup>1</sup> *Gowans.* Daisies.

## CHAPTER XXVI

YEAR 1785

*Mr Cayenne comes to the parish—A passionate character — His outrageous behaviour at the Session-house.*

WELL may we say, in the pious words of my old friend and neighbour, the Reverend Mr Keekie of Loupinton, that the world is such a wheel-carriage that it might very properly be called the WHIRL'D. This reflection was brought home to me in a very striking manner while I was preparing a discourse for my people, to be preached on the anniversary day of my placing, in which I took a view of what had passed in the parish during the five-and-twenty years that I had been, by the grace of God, the pastor thereof. The bairns, that were bairns when I came among my people, were ripened unto parents, and a new generation was swelling in the bud around me. But it is what happened that I have to give an account of.

This year, the Lady Macadam's jointure-house that was, having been long without a tenant, a Mr Cayenne and his family, American loyalists,

came and took it, and settled among us for a time. His wife was a clever woman, and they had two daughters, Miss Virginia and Miss Carolina. He was himself an *ettercap*,<sup>1</sup> a perfect *spunkie*<sup>1</sup> of passion, as ever was known in town or country : his wife had a terrible time o't with him ; and yet the unhappy man had a great share of common sense, and, saving the exploits of his unmanageable temper, was an honest and creditable gentleman. Of his humour we soon had a sample, as I shall relate at length all about it.

Shortly after he came to the parish, Mrs Balwhidder and me waited upon the family to pay our respects, and Mr Cayenne, in a free and hearty manner, insisted on us staying to dinner. His wife, I could see, was not satisfied with this,—not being, as I discerned afterwards, prepared to give an entertainment to strangers—; however, we fell into the misfortune of staying, and nothing could exceed the happiness of Mr Cayenne. I thought him one of the blithest bodies I had ever seen, and had no notion that he was such a tap of tow as in the sequel he proved himself.

As there was something extra to prepare, the dinner was a little longer of being on the table than usual ; at which he began to fash, and every now and then took a turn up and down the room, with his hands behind his back, giving a short, melancholious whistle. At length the dinner was served, but it was more scanty than he had ex-

<sup>1</sup> *Ettercap*. A spider : then, like *Spunkie*, a fiery fellow.

pected, and this upset his good-humour altogether. Scarcely had I asked the blessing when he began to storm at his blackamoor servant, who was, however, used to his way, and did his work without minding him. But by some neglect there was no mustard down, which Mr Cayenne called for in the voice of a tempest, and one of the servant lasses came in with the pot, trembling. It happened that, as it had not been used for a day or two before, the lid was clagged,<sup>1</sup> and, as it were, glued in, so that Mr Cayenne could not get it out; which put him quite wud,<sup>2</sup> and he attempted to fling it at Sambo's (the black lad) head, and it stottit against<sup>3</sup> the wall, and the lid flying open, the whole mustard flew in his own face, which made him a sight not to be spoken of. However, it calmed him; but, really, as I had never seen such a man before, I could not but consider the accident as a providential reproof, and trembled to think what greater evil might fall out in the hands of a man so left to himself in the intemperance of passion.

But the worst thing about Mr Cayenne was his meddling with matters in which he had no concern: he had a most irksome nature, and could not be at rest, so that he was truly a thorn in our side. Among other of his strange doings was the part he took in the proceedings of the Session. With that he had as little to do, in a manner, as

<sup>1</sup> *Clagged.* Clogged.

<sup>2</sup> *Wud.* Beside himself with rage.

<sup>3</sup> *Stottit against.* Rebounded from.

the man in the moon ; but, having no business on his hands, he attended every sederunt, and from less to more (having no self-government) he began to give his opinion in our deliberations, and often bred us trouble by causing strife to arise.

It happened that, as the time of the summer occasion was drawing near, it behoved us to make arrangements about the assistance ; and upon the suggestion of the elders, to which I paid always the greatest deference, I invited Mr Keekie of Loupinton, who was a sound preacher, and a great expounder of the kittle<sup>1</sup> parts of the Old Testament, being a man well versed in the Hebrew and etymologies, for which he was much revered by the old people that delighted to search the Scriptures. I had also written to Mr Sprose of Annock, a preacher of another sort, being a vehement and powerful thresher of the Word, making the chaff and vain babbling of corrupt commentators to fly from his hand. He was not so well liked, as he wanted that connect method which is needful to the enforcing of doctrine ; but he had never been among us, and it was thought it would be a godly treat to the parish to let the people hear him. Besides Mr Sprose, Mr Waikle of Gowanry, a quiet hewer-out of the image of holiness in the heart, was likewise invited :—all in addition to our old stoops<sup>2</sup> from the adjacent parishes.

None of these three preachers was in any

<sup>1</sup> *Kittle*. Difficult.    <sup>2</sup> *Old stoops*. Well-trying supports.

estimation with Mr Cayenne, who had only heard each of them once; and he, happening to be present in the session-house at the time, inquired how we had settled. I thought this not a very orderly question; but I gave him a civil answer, saying that Mr Keekie of Loupinton would preach on the morning of the fast-day, Mr Sprose of Annock in the afternoon, and Mr Waikle of Gowanry on the Saturday.<sup>1</sup> Never shall I and the elders, while the breath of life is in our bodies, forget the reply. Mr Cayenne struck the table like a clap of thunder, and cried, "Mr Keekie of Loupinton, and Mr Sprose of Annock, and Mr Waikle of Gowanry, and all such trash, may go to —— and be ——!" And out of the house he bounced, like a hand-ball stotting on a stone.

The elders and me were confounded, and for some time we could not speak, but looked at each other, doubtful if our ears heard aright. At long and length I came to myself, and, in the strength of God, took my place at the table, and said that this was an outrageous impiety not to be borne,—which all the elders agreed to; and we thereupon came to a resolve, which I dictated myself, wherein we debarred Mr Cayenne from ever after entering, unless summoned, the session-house, the which resolve we directed the session-clerk to send to him direct. And thus we vindicated the insulted privileges of the church.

Mr Cayenne had cooled before he got home,

<sup>1</sup> Note A. *Communion Services.*



and, our paper coming to him in his appeased blood, he immediately came to the manse, and made a contrite apology for his hasty temper, which I reported, in due time and form, to the Session. And there the matter ended. But here was an example plain to be seen of the truth of the old proverb that as one door shuts another opens; for scarcely were we in quietness by the decease of that old light-headed woman, the Lady Macadam, till a full equivalent for her was given in this hot and fiery Mr Cayenne.

## CHAPTER XXVII

YEAR 1786

*Repairs required for the manse—By the sagacious management of Mr Kibbock, the heritors are made to give a new manse altogether—They begin, however, to look upon me with a grudge, which provokes me to claim an augmentation, which I obtain.*

FROM the day of my settlement, I had resolved, in order to win the affections of my people, and to promote unison among the Heritors, to be of as little expense to the parish as possible; but by this time the manse had fallen into a sore state of decay,—the doors were wormed on the hinges, the casements of the windows chattered all the winter like the teeth of a person perishing with cold,—so that we had no comfort in the house; by which, at the urgent instigations of Mrs Balwhidder, I was obligated to represent our situation to the Session. I would rather, having so much saved money in the bank, have paid the needful repairs myself than have done this; but she said it would be a rank injustice

to our own family ; and her father, Mr Kibbock, who was very long-headed, with more than a common man's portion of understanding, pointed out to me that, as my life was but in my lip, it would be a wrong thing, towards whomsoever was ordained to be my successor, to use the heritors to the custom of the minister paying for the reparations of the manse, as it might happen he might not be so well able to afford it as me. So in a manner, by their persuasion, and the constraint of the justice of the case, I made a report of the infirmities of both doors and windows, as well as of the rotten state of the floors, which were constantly in want of cobbling. Over and above all, I told them of the sarking of the roof,<sup>1</sup> which was as frush as a puddock-stool,<sup>2</sup> insomuch that in every blast some of the pins lost their grip, and the slates came hurling off.

The heritors were accordingly convened ; and, after some deliberation, they proposed that the house should be seen to, and whitewashed and painted. I thought this might do, for I saw they were terrified at the expense of a thorough repair. But when I went home and repeated to Mrs Balwhidder what had been said at the meeting, and my thankfulness at getting the heritors' consent to do so much, she was excessively angry, and told me that all the painting and whitewashing in the

<sup>1</sup> *Sarking of the roof.* The covering of wood above the rafters and under the slates.

<sup>2</sup> *Frush as a puddock-stool.* Short (brittle) as a toad-stool.

world would avail nothing, for that the house was as a sepulchre full of rottenness ; and she sent for Mr Kibbock, her father, to confer with him on the way of getting the matter put to rights.

Mr Kibbock came, and, hearing of what had passed, pondered for some time, and then said : “ All was very right ! The minister [meaning me] has just to get tradesmen to look at the house, and write out their opinion of what it needs. There will be plaster to mend ; so, before painting, he will get a plasterer. There will be a slater wanted ;—he has just to get a slater’s estimate, and a wright’s,<sup>1</sup> and so forth, and, when all is done, lay them before the Session and the heritors, who, no doubt, will direct the reparations to go forward.”

This was very pawkie counselling of Mr Kibbock, and I did not see through it at the time, but did as he recommended, and took all the different estimates, when they came in, to the Session. The elders commended my prudence exceedingly for so doing before going to work. One of them asked me what the amount of the whole would be ; but I had not cast it up. Some of the heritors thought that a hundred pounds would be sufficient for the outlay ; but judge of our consternation when, in counting up all the sums of the different estimates together, we found them well on towards a thousand pounds. “ Better big<sup>2</sup> a new house at once, than do this ! ” cried

<sup>1</sup> *A wright’s.* A carpenter’s.

<sup>2</sup> *Big.* Build.

all the elders, by which I then perceived the draughtiness<sup>1</sup> of Mr Kibbock's advice. Accordingly, another meeting of the heritors was summoned, and after a great deal of controversy it was agreed that a new manse should be erected; and, shortly after, we contracted with Thomas Trowel, the mason, to build one for six hundred pounds, with all the requisite appurtenances; by which a clear gain was saved to the parish, by the foresight of Mr Kibbock, to the amount of nearly four hundred pounds. But the heritors did not mean to have allowed the sort of repair that his plan comprehended. He was, however, a far forecasting man: the like of him for natural parts not being in our country-side; and nobody could get the whip-hand of him, in either a bargain or an improvement, when he once was sensible of the advantage. He was, indeed, a blessing to the shire, both by his example as a farmer and by his sound and discreet advice in the contentions of his neighbours, being a man, as was a saying among the commonality, "wiser than the law and the fifteen Lords of Edinburgh."

The building of the new manse occasioned a heavy cess on the heritors, which made them overly ready to pick holes in the coats of me and the elders; so that, out of my forbearance and delicacy in time past, there grew a lordliness on their part that was an ill return for the years that I had endured no little inconveniency for

<sup>1</sup> *Draughtiness.* Artfulness.

their sake. It was not in my heart or principles to harm the hair of a dog ; but, when I discerned the austerity with which they were disposed to treat their minister, I bethought me that, for the preservation of what was due to the establishment and the upholding of the decent administration of religion, I ought to set my face against the sordid intolerance by which they were actuated. This notion I weighed well before divulging it to any person ; but when I had assured myself as to the rectitude thereof, I rode over one day to Mr Kibbock's, and broke my mind to him about claiming out of the teinds an augmentation of my stipend,—not because I needed it, but in case, after me, some bare and hungry gorbie of the Lord should be sent upon the parish, in no such condition to plea with the heritors as I was. Mr Kibbock highly approved of my intent ; and by his help, after much tribulation, I got an augmentation both in glebe and income ; and—to mark my reason for what I did—I took upon me to keep and clothe the wives and orphans of the parish who lost their breadwinners in the American war. But, for all that, the heritors spoke of me as an avaricious Jew, and made the hard-won fruits of Mrs Balwhidder's great thrift and good management a matter of reproach against me. Few of them would come to the church, but stayed away, to the detriment of their own souls hereafter, in order, as they thought, to punish me ; so that, in the course of this year, there was a

visible decay of the sense of religion among the better orders of the parish, and, as will be seen in the sequel, their evil example infected the minds of many of the rising generation.

It was in this year that Mr Cayenne bought the mailing of the Wheatricks. But he did not begin to build his house till the following spring; for, being ill to please with a plan, he fell out with the builders, and on one occasion got into such a passion with Mr Trowel, the mason, that he struck him a blow on the face, for which he was obligated to make atonement. It was thought the matter would have been carried before the Lords; but, by the mediation of Mr Kibbock, with my helping hand, a reconciliation was brought about, Mr Cayenne indemnifying the mason with a sum of money to say no more anent it; after which he employed him to build his house,—a thing that no man could have thought possible who reflected on the enmity between them.



## CHAPTER XXVIII

YEAR 1787

*Lady Macadam's house is changed into an inn—The making of jelly becomes common in the parish—Meg Gaffaw is present at a payment of victual—Her behaviour.*

THERE had been, as I have frequently observed, a visible improvement going on in the parish. From the time of the making of the toll-road, every new house that was built in the clachan was built along that road. Among other changes thereby caused, the Lady Macadam's jointure-house that was, which stood in a pleasant parterre, enclosed within a stone wall and an iron gate, having a pillar with a pine-apple head on each side, came to be in the middle of the town. While Mr Cayenne inhabited the same, it was maintained in good order; but on his flitting to his own new house on the Wheatrigs the parterre was soon overrun with weeds, and it began to wear the look of a waste place. Robert Toddy, who then kept the change-house, and had, from the lady's death, rented the coach-house for stabling,

in this juncture thought of it for an inn; so he set his own house to Thomas Treddles, the weaver, (whose son, William, is now the great Glasgow manufacturer, that has cotton-mills and steam-engines), and took "The Place," as it was called, and had a fine sign, THE CROSS-KEYS, painted and put up in golden characters, by which it became one of the most noted inns anywhere to be seen; and the civility of Mrs Toddy was commended by all strangers. But although this transmutation from a change-house to an inn was a vast amendment, in a manner, to the parish, there was little amendment of manners thereby; for the farmer lads began to hold dancings and other riotous proceedings there, and to bring, as it were, the evil practices of towns into the heart of the country. All sort of license was allowed as to drink and hours; and the edifying example of Mr Mutchkins and his pious family was no longer held up to the imitation of the wayfaring man.

Saving the mutation of "The Place" into an inn, nothing very remarkable happened in this year. We got into our new manse about the middle of March; but it was rather damp (being new plastered), and it caused me to have a severe attack of the rheumatics in the fall of the year.

I should not, in my notations, forget to mark a new luxury that got in among the commonality at this time. By the opening of new roads, and the traffic thereon with carts and carriers, and by our young men that were sailors going to the Clyde,

and sailing to Jamaica and the West Indies, heaps of sugar and coffee-beans were brought home, while many, among the kailstocks and cabbages in their yards, had planted groset<sup>1</sup> and berry bushes; which two things happening together, the fashion to make jam and jelly, which hitherto had been known in the kitchens and confectionaries of the gentry only, came to be introduced into the clachan. All this, however, was not without a plausible pretext; for it was found that jelly was an excellent medicine for a sore throat, and jam a remedy as good as London candy for a cough, or a cold, or a shortness of breath. I could not, however, say that this gave me so much concern as the smuggling trade; only, it occasioned a great fasherie<sup>2</sup> to Mrs Balwhidder; for in the berry time there was no end to the borrowing of her brass-pan to make jelly and jam, till Mrs Toddy of the Cross-Keys bought one, which, in its turn, came into request, and saved ours.

It was in the Martinmas quarter of this year that I got the first payment of my augmentation. Having no desire to rip up old sores, I shall say no more anent it, the worst being anticipated in my chronicle of the last year; but there was a thing happened in the payment that occasioned a vexation, at the time, of a very disagreeable nature. Daft Meg Gaffaw, who, from the tragical death of her mother, was a privileged subject, used to come to the manse on the Saturdays for a meal of meat.

<sup>1</sup> *Groset.* Gooseberry.

<sup>2</sup> *Fasherie.* Bother.

It so fell out that as, by some neglect of mine, no steps had been taken to regulate the disposal of the victual that constituted the means of the augmentation, some of the heritors, in an ungracious temper, sent what they called the tithe-boll (the Lord knows it was not the fiftieth !) to the manse, where I had no place to put it. This fell out on a Saturday night, when I was busy with my sermon, thinking not of silver or gold, but of much better ; so that I was greatly molested and disturbed thereby. Daft Meg, who sat by the kitchen chimley-lug, hearing a', said nothing for a time ; but when she saw how Mrs Balwhidder and me were put to, she cried out with a loud voice, like a soul under the inspiration of prophecy : "When the widow's cruse had filled all the vessels in the house, the Lord stopped the increase. Verily, verily, I say unto you, if your barns be filled, and your girnell-kists<sup>1</sup> can hold no more, seek till ye shall find the tume<sup>2</sup> basins of the poor, and therein pour the corn, and the oil, and the wine of your abundance : so shall ye be blessed of the Lord." The which words I took for an admonition, and directing the sacks to be brought into the dining-room and other chambers of the manse, I sent off the heritors' servants, that had done me this prejudice, with an unexpected thankfulness. But this, as I afterwards was informed, both them and their masters attributed to the greedy grasp of avarice, with which they considered

<sup>1</sup> *Girnell-kists.* Meal-chests.

<sup>2</sup> *Tume.* Empty.

me as misled ; and, having said so, nothing could exceed their mortification on Monday when they heard (for they were of those who had deserted the kirk) that I had given, by the precentor, notice to every widow in the parish that was in need to come to the manse and she would receive her portion of the partitioning of the augmentation. Thus, without any offence on my part, saving the strictness of justice, was a division made between me and the heritors. But the people were with me ; and my own conscience was with me ; and, though the fronts of the lofts and the pews of the heritors were but thinly filled, I trusted that a good time was coming, when the gentry would see the error of their way. So I bent the head of resignation to the Lord, and, assisted by the wisdom of Mr Kibbock, adhered to the course I had adopted ; but at the close of the year my heart was sorrowful for the schism, and my prayer on Hogmanay<sup>1</sup> was one of great bitterness of soul, that such an evil had come to pass.

<sup>1</sup> *Hogmanay*. The last day of the year.

## CHAPTER XXIX

YEAR 1788

*A cotton-mill is built—The new spirit which it introduces among the people.*

IT had been often remarked by ingenious men that the Brawl burn, which ran through the parish, though a small was yet a rapid stream, and had a wonderful capability for damming, and to turn mills. From the time that the Irville water deserted its channel this brook grew into repute, and several mills and dams had been erected on its course. In this year a proposal came from Glasgow to build a cotton-mill on its banks, beneath the Witch-linn, which being on a corner of the Wheatrig, the property of Mr Cayenne, he not only consented thereto, but took a part in the profit or loss therein; and, being a man of great activity, though we thought him, for many a day, a serpent-plague sent upon the parish, he proved thereby one of our greatest benefactors. The cotton-mill was built, and a spacious fabric it was. Nothing like it had been seen before in our day and generation. And, for the people that were

brought to work in it, a new town was built in the vicinity, which Mr Cayenne, the same being founded on his land, called Cayenneville, the name of the plantation in Virginia that had been taken from him by the rebellious Americans. From that day Fortune was lavish of her favours upon him : his property swelled, and grew in the most extraordinary manner ; and the whole countryside was stirring with a new life. For, when the mill was set agoing, he got weavers of muslin established in Cayenneville ; and, shortly after, (but that did not take place till the year following), he brought women all the way from the neighbourhood of Manchester, in England, to teach the lassie bairns in our old clachan tambouring.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the ancient families, in their turreted houses, were not pleased with this innovation, especially when they saw the handsome dwellings that were built for the weavers of the mills, and the unstinted hand that supplied the wealth required for the carrying on of the business. It sank their pride into insignificance, and many of them would almost rather have wanted the rise that took place in the value of their lands than have seen this incoming of what they called o'er-sea speculation.<sup>2</sup> Saving the building of the cotton-mill, and the beginning of Cayenneville, nothing more memorable happened in this year.

<sup>1</sup> *Tambouring.* Embroidery on a circular frame.

<sup>2</sup> See *Sir Andrew Wylie*, Chap. xc.



Still, it was nevertheless a year of a great activity : the minds of men were excited to new enterprises ; a new genius, as it were, had descended upon the earth ; and there was an erect and out-looking spirit abroad that was not to be satisfied with the taciturn regularity of ancient affairs. Even Miss Sabrina Hooky, the schoolmistress, though now waned from her meridian, was touched with the enlivening rod, and set herself to learn and to teach tambouring, in such a manner as to supersede by precept and example that old time-honoured functionary (as she herself called it) the spinning-wheel, proving, as she did one night to Mr Kibbock and me, that if more money could be made by a woman tambouring than by spinning, it was better for her to tambour than to spin.

But, in the midst of all this commercing and manufacturing, I began to discover signs of decay in the wonted simplicity of our country ways. Among the cotton-spinners and muslin-weavers of Cayenneville were several unsatisfied and ambitious spirits, who clubbed together, and got a London newspaper to the Cross-Keys, where they were nightly in the habit of meeting and debating about the affairs of the French, which were then gathering towards a head. They were represented to me as lads by-common in capacity, but with unsettled notions of religion. They were, however, quiet and orderly ; and some of them since, at Glasgow, Paisley, and Manchester, and

even, I am told, in London, have grown into a topping way.

It seems they did not like my manner of preaching, and on that account absented themselves from public worship. When I heard this, I sent for some of them, to convince them of their error with regard to the truth of divers points of doctrine; but they confounded me with their objections, and used my arguments, which were the old and orthodox proven opinions of the Divinity Hall, as if they had been the light sayings of a vain man. So that I was troubled, fearing that some change would ensue to my people, who had hitherto lived amidst the boughs and branches of the gospel, unmolested by the fowler's snare; and I set myself to watch narrowly, and with a vigilant eye, what would come to pass.

There was a visible increase among us of worldly prosperity in the course of this year; insomuch that some of the farmers, who were in the custom of taking their vendibles to the neighbouring towns on the Tuesdays, the Wednesdays, and Fridays, were led to open a market on the Saturdays in our own clachan, the which proved a great convenience. But I cannot take it upon me to say whether this can be said to have well begun in the present Ann. Dom.; only, I know that in the summer of the ensuing year it was grown into a settled custom; which I well recollect by the Macadams coming with their bairns

to see Mrs Malcolm, their mother, suddenly on a Saturday afternoon; on which occasion me and Mrs Balwhidder were invited to dine with them, and Mrs Malcolm bought in the market for the dinner that day, both mutton and fowls such as twenty years before could not have been got for love or money on such a pinch. Besides, she had two bottles of red and white wine from the Cross-Keys, luxuries which, saving in the Breadland House in its best days, could not have been had in the whole parish, but must have been brought from a borough town. For Eaglesham Castle is not within the bounds of Dalmailing; and my observe does not apply to the stock and stores of that honourable mansion, but only to the dwellings of our own heritors, who were in general straitened in their circumstances, partly with upsetting, and partly by the eating rust of family pride, which hurt the edge of many a clever fellow among them that would have done well in the way of trade, but sunk into divors<sup>1</sup> for the sake of their genteelity.

<sup>1</sup> *Divors.* Bankrupts.

## CHAPTER XXX

YEAR 1789

*William Malcolm comes to the parish and preaches—The opinions upon his sermon.*

THIS I have always reflected upon as one of our blessed years. It was not remarkable for any extraordinary occurrence; but there was a hopefulness in the minds of men, and a planning of new undertakings, of which, whatever may be the upshot, the devising is ever rich in the cheerful anticipations of good.

Another new line of road was planned, for a shorter cut to the cotton-mill, from the main road to Glasgow; and a public-house was opened in Cayenneville. The latter, however, was not an event that gave me much satisfaction; but it was a convenience to the inhabitants, and the carriers that brought the cotton-bags and took away the yarn twice a week needed a place of refreshment. And there was a stage-coach set up thrice every week from Ayr, (and it passed through the town), by which it was possible to travel to Glasgow between breakfast and dinner time, a thing that

could not, when I came to the parish, have been thought within the compass of man.

This stage-coach I thought one of the greatest conveniences that had been established among us. It enabled Mrs Balwhidder to send a basket of her fresh butter into the Glasgow market, by which, in the spring and the fall of the year, she got a great price; for the Glasgow merchants are fond of excellent eatables, and the payment was aye ready money,—Tam Whirlit, the driver, paying for the one basket when he took up the other.

In this year William Malcolm, the youngest son of the widow, having been some time a tutor in a family in the east country, came to see his mother: as indeed he had done every year from the time he went to the college; but this occasion was made remarkable by his preaching in my pulpit. His old acquaintance were curious to hear him, and I myself had a sort of a wish likewise, being desirous to know how far he was orthodox; so I thought fit, on the suggestion of one of the elders, to ask him to preach one day for me, which, after some fleeching,<sup>1</sup> he consented to do. I think, however, there was a true modesty in his diffidence,—although his reason was a weak one, being, lest he might not satisfy his mother, who had as yet never heard him. Accordingly, on the Sabbath after, he did preach, and the kirk was well packed, and I was not one of the least attentive of the congregation. His sermon

<sup>1</sup> *Fleeching.* Coaxing.

assuredly was well put together, and there was nothing to object to in his doctrine; but the elderly people thought his language rather too Englified; which I thought likewise, for I never could abide that the plain auld Kirk of Scotland, with her sober Presbyterian simplicity, should borrow, either in word or in deed, from the language of the prelatic hierarchy of England. Nevertheless, the younger part of the congregation were loud in his praise, saying, there had not been heard before such a style of language in our side of the country. As for Mrs Malcolm, his mother, when I spoke to her anent the same, she said but little, expressing only her hope that his example would be worthy of his precepts. So that, upon the whole, it was a satisfaction to us all that he was likely to prove a stoop and upholding pillar to the Kirk of Scotland. And his mother had the satisfaction, before she died, to see him a placed minister, and his name among the authors of his country; for he published at Edinburgh a volume of Moral Essays, of which he sent me a pretty bound copy, and they were greatly creditable to his pen, though lacking somewhat of that birr and smeddum<sup>2</sup> that is the juice and flavour of books of that sort.

<sup>1</sup> *Birr and smeddum.* Force and mettle.

## CHAPTER XXXI

YEAR 1790

*A bookseller's shop is set up among the houses of the weavers at Cayenneville.*

THE features of this Ann. Dom. partook of the character of its predecessor. Several new houses were added to the clachan; Cayenneville was spreading out with weavers' shops, and growing up fast into a town. In some respects it got the start of ours; for one day, when I was going to dine with Mr Cayenne at Wheatrig House, not a little to my amazement did I behold a bookseller's shop opened there, with sticks of red and black wax, pouncet-boxes, pens, pocket-books, and new publications, in the window, such as the like of was only to be seen in cities and borough towns. And it was lighted at night by a patent lamp, which shed a wonderful beam, burning oil, and having no smoke. The man sold likewise perfumery, powder-puffs, trinkets, and Dublin dolls, besides penknives, Castile soap, and walking-sticks, together with a prodigy of other luxuries too tedious to mention.



Upon conversing with the man,—for I was enchanted to go into this phenomenon, for as no less could I regard it,—he told me that he had a correspondence with London, and could get me down any book published there within the same month in which it came out; and he showed me divers of the newest come out, of which I did not read even in the Scots Magazine till more than three months after, although I had till then always considered that work as most interesting for its early intelligence. But what I was most surprised to hear was that he took in a daily London newspaper for the spinners and weavers, who paid him a penny a week apiece for the same, they being all greatly taken up with what, at the time, was going on in France.

This bookseller in the end, however, proved a whawp<sup>1</sup> in our nest; for he was in league with some of the English reformers, and when the story took wind three years after, concerning the plots and treasons of the corresponding societies and democrats, he was fain to make a moonlight flitting, leaving his wife for a time to manage his affairs. I could not, however, think any ill of the man notwithstanding; for he had very correct notions of right and justice, in a political sense, and when he came into the parish he was as orderly and well-behaved as any other body,—and conduct is a test that I have always found as good for a man's principles as professions. Nor,

<sup>1</sup> *Whawp*. Curlew.

at the time of which I am speaking, was there any of that dread or fear of reforming the government that has since been occasioned by the wild and wasteful hand which the French employed in their revolution.

But, among other improvements, I should mention that a Doctor Marigold came and settled in Cayenneville : a small, round, happy-tempered man, whose funny stories were far better liked than his drugs. There was a doubt among some of the weavers if he was a skilful Esculapian, and this doubt led to their holding out an inducement to another medical man, Dr Tanzey, to settle there likewise ; by which it grew into a saying that at Cayenneville there was a doctor for health as well as sickness (for Dr Marigold was one of the best hands in the country at a pleasant punch-bowl, while Dr Tanzey had all the requisite knowledge of the faculty for the bedside).

It was in this year that the hour-plate and hand on the kirk steeple were renewed, as, indeed, may yet be seen by the date, though it be again greatly in want of fresh gilding ; for it was by my advice that the figures of the Ann. Dom. were placed one in each corner. In this year, likewise, the bridge over the Brawl burn was built : a great convenience, in the winter time, to the parishioners that lived on the north side ; for when there happened to be a spait on the Sunday, it kept them from the kirk. But I did not find that the bridge mended the matter till after the conclusion

of the war against the democrats, and the beginning of that which we are now waging with Boney, their child and champion. It is, indeed, wonderful to think of the occultation of grace that was taking place about this time, throughout the whole bound of Christendom. I could mark a visible darkness of infidelity spreading in the corner of the vineyard committed to my keeping, and a falling away of the vines from their wonted props and confidence in the truths of Revelation. But I said nothing. I knew that the faith could not be lost, and that it would be found purer and purer the more it was tried ; and this I have lived to see, many now being zealous members of the church, who were abundantly lukewarm at the period of which I am now speaking.

## CHAPTER XXXII

YEAR 1791

*I place my son Gilbert in a counting-house at Glasgow—My observations on Glasgow—On my return I preach against the vanity of riches, and begin to be taken for a black-neb.*

IN the spring of this year I took my son Gilbert in to Glasgow, to place him in a counting-house, as he had no inclination for any of the learned professions; and, not having been there from the time when I was sent to the General Assembly, I cannot express my astonishment at the great improvements, surpassing far all that was done in our part of the country, which I thought was not to be paralleled. When I came afterwards to reflect on my simplicity in this, it was clear to me that we should not judge of the rest of the world by what we see going on around ourselves, but walk abroad into other parts, and thereby enlarge our sphere of observation, as well as ripen our judgment of things.

But although there was no doubt a great and visible increase of the city,—loftier buildings on

all sides, and streets that spread their arms far into the embraces of the country,—I thought the looks of the population were impaired, and that there was a greater proportion of long white faces in the Trongate than when I attended the Divinity class. These, I was told, were the weavers and others concerned in the cotton trade,—which I could well believe, for they were very like in their looks to the men of Cayenneville, only, from living in a crowded town and not breathing a wholesome country air between their tasks, they had a stronger cast of unhealthy melancholy. I was very glad, therefore, that Providence had placed in my hand the pastoral staff of a country parish; for it cut me to the heart to see so many young men, in the rising prime of life, already in the arms of a pale consumption. “If, therefore,” said I to Mrs Balwhidder, when I returned home to the manse, “we live, as it were, within the narrow circle of ignorance, we are spared from the pain of knowing many an evil; and, surely, in much knowledge there is sadness of heart.”

But the main effect of this was to make me do all in my power to keep my people contented with their lowly estate; for in that same spirit of improvement, which was so busy everywhere, I could discern something like a shadow, that showed it was not altogether of that pure advantage which avarice led all so eagerly to believe. Accordingly, I began a series of sermons on the

evil and vanity of riches, and, for the most part of the year, pointed out in what manner they led the possessor to indulge in sinful luxuries, and how indulgence begat desire, and desire betrayed integrity and corrupted the heart; making it evident that the rich man was liable to forget his unmerited obligations to God, and to oppress the laborious and the needful when he required their services.

Little did I imagine, in thus striving to keep aloof the ravenous wolf Ambition from my guileless flock, that I was giving cause for many to think me an enemy to the king and government, and a perverter of Christianity, to suit levelling doctrines. But so it was. Many of the heritors considered me a black-neb<sup>1</sup>; though I knew it not, but went on in the course of my duty, thinking only how best to preserve peace on earth and goodwill towards men. I saw, however, an altered manner in the deportment of several with whom I had long lived in friendly terms. It was not marked enough to make me inquire the cause, but sufficiently plain to affect my ease of mind. Accordingly, about the end of this year, I fell into a dull way: my spirit was subdued, and at times I was aweary of the day, and longed for the night when I might close my eyes in peaceful slumbers. I missed my son Gilbert, who had been a companion to me in the long nights, while

<sup>1</sup> *Black-neb*. A name given to those who held "levelling doctrines."

his mother was busy with the lasses<sup>1</sup> and their ceaseless wheels and cardings in the kitchen. Often could I have found it in my heart to have banned that never-ceasing industry, and to tell Mrs Balwhidder that the married state was made for something else than to make napery and beetle blankets.<sup>2</sup> But it was her happiness to keep all at work, and she had no pleasure in any other way of life ; so I sat many a night by the fireside with resignation : sometimes in the study, and sometimes in the parlour ; and, as I was doing nothing, Mrs Balwhidder said it was needless to light the candle. Our daughter Janet was in this time at a boarding-school in Ayr, so that I was really a most solitary married man.

<sup>1</sup> “The ‘lasses’ were the female servants, each of whom had a spinning-wheel, and, when her share of the household work was done, she was bound to spin a *stent* or task for all the lincens of the house ; from the finest damask to the coarsest sheeting, was spun at home.”—*Note to Miss Stirling Graham’s ‘Mystifications.’*

<sup>2</sup> *Beetle blankets.* To mangle in the old-fashioned way with a beetle, or heavy wooden mallet.



## CHAPTER XXXIII

YEAR 1792

*Troubled with low spirits—Accidental meeting with Mr Cayenne, who endeavours to remove the prejudices entertained against me.*

WHEN the spring in this year began to brighten on the brae, the cloud of dulness that had darkened and oppressed me all the winter somewhat melted away, and I could now and then joke again at the never-ending toil and trouble of that busiest of all bees, the second Mrs Balwhidder. But still I was far from being right: a small matter affected me, and I was overly given to walking by myself, and musing on things that I could tell nothing about: my thoughts were just the rack of a dream without form, driving witlessly as the smoke that mounteth up and is lost in the airy heights of the sky.

Heeding little of what was going on in the clachan, and taking no interest in the concerns of anybody, I would have been contented to die; but I had no ail about me. An accident fell out, however, that, by calling on me for an effort,

had the blessed influence of clearing my vapours almost entirely away.

One morning as I was walking on the sunny side of the road, where the footpath was in the next year made to the cotton-mill, I fell in with Mr Cayenne, who was seemingly much fashed—a small matter could do that at any time—; and he came up to me with a red face and an angry eye. It was not my intent to speak to him, for I was grown loth to enter into conversation with anybody; so I bowed and passed on. “What,” cried Mr Cayenne: “and will you not speak to me?” I turned round, and said, meekly, “Mr Cayenne, I have no objections to speak to you; but having nothing particular to say, it did not seem necessary just now.”

He looked at me like a gled,<sup>1</sup> and in a minute exclaimed, “Mad, by Jupiter! as mad as a March hare!” He then entered into conversation with me, and said that he had noticed me an altered man, and was just so far on his way to the manse to inquire what had befallen me. So, from less to more, we entered into the marrow of my case, and I told him how I had observed the estranged countenances of some of the heritors; at which he swore an oath that they were a parcel of the damn’dest boobies in the country, and told me how they had taken it into their heads that I was a leveller.

“But I know you better,” said Mr Cayenne, “and

<sup>1</sup> *Gled.* Kite.

have stood up for you as an honest conscientious man, though I don't much like your humdrum preaching. However, let that pass. I insist upon your dining with me to-day, when some of these arrant fools are to be with us, and the devil's in't if I don't make you friends with them." I did not think Mr Cayenne, however, very well qualified for a peacemaker; nevertheless, I consented to go; and, having thus got an inkling of the cause of that cold back-turning which had distressed me so much, I made such an effort to remove the error that was entertained against me that some of the heritors, before we separated, shook me by the hands with the cordiality of renewed friendship; and, as if to make amends for past neglect, there was no end to their invitations to dinner, which had the effect of putting me again on my mettle, and removing the thick and muddy melancholious humour out of my blood.

But what confirmed my cure was the coming home of my daughter Janet from the Ayr boarding-school, where she had learnt to play on the spinnet, and was become a conversable lassie, with a competent knowledge (for a woman) of geography and history; so that, when her mother was busy with the weariful booming wheel, she entertained me sometimes with a tune, and sometimes with her tongue, which made the winter nights fly cantily<sup>1</sup> by.

<sup>1</sup> *Cantily*. Cheerily.

Whether it was owing to the malady of my imagination throughout the greatest part of this year, or that really nothing particular did happen to interest me, I cannot say ; but it is very remarkable that I have nothing remarkable to record,—further than I was at the expense myself of getting the manse rough-cast, and the window cheeks painted, with roans<sup>1</sup> put up, rather than apply to the heritors,—for they were always sorely fashed when called upon for outlay.

<sup>1</sup> *Roans*. Water-spouts for carrying the rain-water off the roof.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

YEAR 1793

*I dream a remarkable dream, and preach a sermon in consequence, applying to the events of the times—Two democratical weaver lads brought before Mr Cayenne, as Justice of Peace.*

ON the first night of this year I dreamt a very remarkable dream, which when I now recall to mind at this distance of time, I cannot but think that there was a cast of prophecy in it. I thought that I stood on the tower of an old Popish kirk, looking out at the window upon the kirkyard, where I beheld ancient tombs, with effigies and coats-of-arms on the wall thereof, and a great gate at the one side, and a door that led into a dark and dismal vault at the other. I thought that all the dead that were lying in the common graves rose out of their coffins; at the same time, from the old and grand monuments with the effigies and coats-of-arms came the great men, and the kings of the earth with crowns on their heads, and globes and sceptres in their hands.

I stood wondering what was to ensue, when

presently I heard the noise of drums and trumpets, and anon I beheld an army with banners entering in at the gate ; upon which the kings and the great men also came forth in their power and array, and a dreadful battle was foughten ; but the multitude that had risen from the common graves stood afar off, and were but lookers-on.

The kings and their host were utterly discomfited. They were driven within the doors of their monuments, their coats-of-arms were broken off and their effigies cast down, and the victors triumphed over them with the flourishes of trumpets and the waving of banners. But, while I looked, the vision was changed ; and I then beheld a wide and a dreary waste, and afar off the steeples of a great city, and a tower in the midst, like the tower of Babel, and on it I could discern, written in characters of fire, "Public Opinion." While I was pondering at the same, I heard a great shout, and presently the conquerors made their appearance, coming over the desolate moor. They were going in great pride and might towards the city ; but an awful burning rose, afar as it were in the darkness, and the flames stood like a tower of fire that reached unto the heavens. And I saw a dreadful hand and an arm stretched from out of the cloud, and in its hold was a besom made of the hail and the storm, and it swept the fugitives like dust ; and in their place I saw the churchyard, as it were, cleared and spread around, the graves closed, and the

ancient tombs, with their coats-of-arms and their effigies of stone, all as they were in the beginning. I then awoke, and behold it was a dream.

This vision perplexed me for many days, and when the news came that the king of France was beheaded by the hands of his people, I received, as it were, a token in confirmation of the vision that had been disclosed to me in my sleep, and I preached a discourse on the same, and against the French Revolution, that was thought one of the greatest and soundest sermons that I had ever delivered in my pulpit.

On the Monday following, Mr Cayenne, who had been some time before appointed a justice of the peace, came over from Wheatrig House to the Cross-Keys, where he sent for me and divers other respectable inhabitants of the clachan, and told us that he was to have a sad business, for a warrant was out to bring before him two democratic weaver lads on a suspicion of high treason. Scarcely were the words uttered when they were brought in, and he began to ask them how they dared to think of dividing, with their liberty and equality of principles, his and every other man's property in the country. The men answered him in a calm manner, and told him they sought no man's property, but only their own natural rights: upon which he called them traitors and reformers. They denied they were traitors, but confessed they were reformers, and said they knew not how that should be imputed to them as a fault,



for that the greatest men of all times had been reformers.

“Was not,” they said, “our Lord Jesus Christ a reformer?”—“And what the devil did he make of it?” cried Mr Cayenne, bursting with passion. “Was he not crucified?”

I thought, when I heard these words, that the pillars of the earth sank beneath me, and that the roof of the house was carried away in a whirlwind. The drums of my ears crackit; blue starns<sup>1</sup> danced before my sight; and I was fain to leave the house and hie me home to the manse, where I sat down in my study, like a stupefied creature, awaiting what would betide. Nothing, however, was found against the weaver lads; but I never from that day could look on Mr Cayenne as a Christian, though, surely, he was a true government-man.

Soon after this affair there was a pleasant re-edification of a gospel-spirit among the heritors, especially when they heard how I had handled the regicides in France; and on the following Sunday I had the comfortable satisfaction to see many a gentleman in their pews that had not been for years within a kirk-door. The democrats, who took a world of trouble to misrepresent the actions of the gentry, insinuated that all this was not from any new sense of grace, but in fear of their being reported as suspected persons to the king's government. But I could not think

<sup>1</sup> *Starns.* Stars.

so, and considered their renewal of communion with the church as a swearing of allegiance to the King of kings, against that host of French atheists who had torn the mortcloth from the coffin, and made it a banner, with which they were gone forth to war against the Lamb. The whole year was, however, spent in great uneasiness, and the proclamation of the war was followed by an appalling stop in trade. We heard of nothing but failures on all hands; and among others that grieved me was that of Mr Maitland of Glasgow, who had befriended Mrs Malcolm in the days of her affliction, and gave her son Robert his fine ship. It was a sore thing to hear of so many breakings, especially of old respected merchants like him, who had been a Lord Provost, and was far declined into the afternoon of life. He did not, however, long survive the mutation of his fortune; but, bending his aged head in sorrow, sank down beneath the stroke, to rise no more.

## CHAPTER XXXV

YEAR 1794

*The condition of the parish, as divided into government-men and Jacobins—I endeavour to prevent Christian charity from being forgotten in the phraseology of utility and philanthropy.*

THIS year had opened into all the leafiness of midsummer before anything memorable happened in the parish, further than that the sad division of my people into government-men and Jacobins was perfected. This calamity,—for I never could consider such heart-burning among neighbours as anything less than a very heavy calamity,—was assuredly occasioned by faults on both sides; but it must be confessed that the gentry did nothing to win the commonality from the errors of their way. A little more condescension on their part would not have made things worse, and might have made them better; but pride interposed, and caused them to think that any show of affability from them would be construed by the democrats into a terror of their power. The democrats, again, were no less to blame; for,

hearing how their compeers were thriving in France and demolishing every obstacle to their ascendancy, they were crouse<sup>1</sup> and really insolent, evidencing none of that temperance in prosperity that proves the possessors worthy of their good fortune.

As for me, my duty in these circumstances was plain and simple. The Christian religion was attempted to be brought into disrepute; the rising generation were taught to gibe at its holiest ordinances; and the kirk was more frequented as a place to while away the time on a rainy Sunday than for any insight of the admonitions and revelations in the sacred book. Knowing this, I perceived that it would be of no effect to handle much the mysteries of the faith; but, as there was at the time a bruit and a sound about universal benevolence, philanthropy, utility, and all the other disguises with which an infidel philosophy appropriated to itself the charity, brotherly love, and well-doing inculcated by our holy religion, I set myself to task upon these heads, and thought it no robbery to use a little of the stratagem employed against Christ's kingdom, to promote the interests thereof in the hearts and understandings of those whose ears would have been sealed against me had I attempted to expound higher things. Accordingly, on one day it was my practice to show what the nature of Christian charity was: comparing it to the light and warmth of the sun,

<sup>1</sup> *Crouse*. Perhaps "cocky" best renders the meaning.

that shines impartially on the just and the unjust : showing that man, without the sense of it as a duty, was as the beasts that perish, and that every feeling of his nature was intimately selfish, but that when actuated by this divine impulse, he rose out of himself, and became as a god, zealous to abate the sufferings of all things that live ; and, on the next day, I demonstrated that the new benevolence which had come so much into vogue was but another version of this Christian virtue. In like manner I dealt with brotherly love, bringing it home to the business and bosoms of my hearers that the Christianity of it was neither enlarged nor bettered by being baptized with the Greek name of philanthropy. With well-doing, however, I went more roundly to work. I told my people that I thought they had more sense than to secede from Christianity to become Utilitarians<sup>1</sup> ; for that it would be a confession of ignorance of the faith they deserted, seeing that it was the main duty inculcated by our religion to do all in morals and manners to which the new-fangled doctrine of utility pretended.

These discourses, which I continued for some time, had no great effect on the men ; but, being prepared in a familiar, household manner, they took the fancies of the young women,—which was

<sup>1</sup> “The author of this essay has reason for believing himself to be the first person who brought the word ‘utilitarian’ into use. He did not invent it, but adopted it from a passing expression in Mr Galt’s *Annals of the Parish*.”—*Note to John Stuart Mill’s ‘Utilitarianism.’*

to me an assurance that the seed I had planted would in time shoot forth. For I reasoned with myself that if the gudemen of the immediate generation should continue freethinkers, their wives will take care that those of the next shall not lack that spunk<sup>1</sup> of grace ; so I was cheered, under that obscurity which fell upon Christianity at this time, with a vista beyond, in which I saw, as it were, the children unborn walking on the bright green, and in the unclouded splendour of the faith.

But what with the decay of trade, and the temptation of the king's bounty, and, over all, the witlessness that was in the spirit of man at this time, the number that enlisted in the course of the year from the parish was prodigious. In one week no less than three weavers and two cotton-spinners went over to Ayr, and took the bounty for the Royal Artillery. And I could not help remarking to myself that the people were grown so used to changes and extraordinary adventures that the single enlistment of Thomas Wilson, at the beginning of the American war, occasioned a far greater grief and work among us than all the swarms that went off week after week in the months of November and December of this year.

<sup>1</sup> *Spunk.* Spark.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

YEAR 1795

*A recruiting party visits the town—After them, players—Then preaching Quakers—The progress of philosophy among the weavers.*

THE present Ann. Dom. was ushered in with an event that I had never dreaded to see in my day in our once sober and religious country parish. The number of lads that had gone over to Ayr to be soldiers from among the spinners and weavers of Cayenneville had been so great that the government got note of it, and sent a recruiting party to be quartered in the town, (for the term *clachan* was beginning by this time to wear out of fashion; indeed, the place itself was outgrowing the fitness of that title). Never shall I forget the dunt<sup>1</sup> that the first tap of the drum gied to my heart as I was sitting on Hansel Monday by myself at the parlour fireside, Mrs Balwhidder being throng with<sup>2</sup> the lasses looking out a washing, and my daughter at Ayr, spending a few days with her

<sup>1</sup> *Dunt.* Stroke.

<sup>2</sup> *Throng with.* Closely engaged with.



old comrades of the boarding-school. I thought it was the enemy; and then, anon, the sound of the fife came shrill to the ear, for the night was low and peaceful. My wife and all the lasses came flying in upon me, crying all, in the name of heaven, What could it be? by which I was obligated to put on my big-coat, and, with my hat and staff, go out to inquire. The whole town was aloof, the aged at the doors in clusters, and the bairns following the tattoo, as it was called, and at every doubling beat of the drum shouting as if they had been in the face of their foemen.

Mr Archibald Dozendale, one of my elders, was saying to several persons around him, just as I came up, "Hech, sirs! but the battle draws near our gates," upon which there was a heavy sigh from all that heard him. Then they told me of the sergeant's business, and we had a serious communing together anent the same. But while we were thus standing discoursing on the causey, Mrs Balwhidder and the servant lasses could thole no longer, but in a troop came in quest of me, to hear what was doing. In short, it was a night both of sorrow and anxiety. Mr Dozendale walked back to the manse with us, and we had a sober tumbler of toddy together, marvelling exceedingly where these fearful portents and changes would stop, both of us being of opinion that the end of the world was drawing nearer and nearer.

Whether it was, however, that the lads belonging to the place did not like to show them-

selves with the enlistment cockades among their acquaintance, or that there was any other reason, I cannot take it upon me to say : certain it is, the recruiting party came no speed, and, in consequence, were removed about the end of March.

Another thing happened in this year, too remarkable for me to neglect to put on record, as it strangely and strikingly marked the rapid revolutions that were going on. In the month of August, at the time of the fair, a gang of play-actors came, and hired Thomas Thacklan's barn for their enactments. They were the first of that clanjamfrey<sup>1</sup> who had ever been in the parish ; and there was a wonderful excitement caused by the rumours concerning them. Their first performance was *Douglas Tragedy* and the *Gentle Shepherd* ; and the general opinion was that the lad who played Norval in the play and Patie in the farce was an English lord's son, who had run away from his parents rather than marry an old cracket lady with a great portion. But, whatever truth there might be in this notion, certain it is the whole pack was in a state of perfect beggary ; and yet, for all that, they not only in their parts (as I was told) laughed most heartily, but made others do the same,—for I was constrained to let my daughter go to see them, with some of her acquaintance, and she gave me such an account of what they did that I thought I would have

<sup>1</sup> *Clanjamfrey*. Worthless crew.

liked to have gotten a keek at them myself. At the same time, I must own this was a sinful curiosity, and I stifled it to the best of my ability. Among other plays that they did was one called *Macbeth and the Witches*, which the Miss Cayennes had seen performed in London, when they were there in the winter-time with their father, for three months, seeing the world, after coming from the boarding-school. But it was no more like the true play of Shakspeare the poet, according to their account, than a duddy betherel, set up to fright the sparrows from the peas, is like a living gentleman. The hungry players, instead of behaving like guests at the royal banquet, were voracious on the needful feast of bread, and the strong ale that served for wine in decanters. But the greatest sport of all was about a kail-pot, that acted the part of a caldron, and should have sunk with thunder and lightning into the earth; however, it did quite as well, for it made its exit, as Miss Virginia said, by walking quietly off, being pulled by a string fastened to one of its feet. No scene of the play was so much applauded as this one; and the actor who did the part of King Macbeth made a most polite bow of thankfulness to the audience for the approbation with which they had received the performance of the pot.

We had likewise, shortly after the "omnes exeunt" of the players, an exhibition of a different sort in the same barn. This was by two English Quakers and a Quaker lady, tanners from

Kendal, who had been at Ayr on some leather business, where they preached, but made no proselytes. The travellers were all three in a whisky<sup>1</sup> drawn by one of the best-ordered horses, as the hostler at the Cross-Keys told me, ever seen. They came to the inn to their dinner, and, meaning to stay all night, sent round to let it be known that they would hold a meeting in Friend Thacklan's barn. (But Thomas denied they were either kith or kin to him; this, however, was their way of speaking.)

In the evening, owing to the notice, a great congregation was assembled in the barn; and I myself, along with Mr Archibald Dozendale, went there likewise, to keep the people in awe, for we feared the strangers might be jeered and insulted. The three were seated aloft on a high stage, prepared on purpose with two mares<sup>2</sup> and scaffold-deals borrowed from Mr Trowel the mason. They sat long and silent; but at last the spirit moved the woman, and she rose, and delivered a very sensible exposition of Christianity. I was really surprised to hear such sound doctrine; and Mr Dozendale said, justly, that it was more to the purpose than some that my younger brethren from Edinburgh endeavoured to teach. So that those who went to laugh at the sincere simplicity of the pious Quakers were rebuked by a very edifying discourse on the moral duties of a Christian's life.

<sup>1</sup> Note F.

<sup>2</sup> *Mares.* Trestles used by masons to carry the scaffold-deals.

Upon the whole, however, this, to the best of my recollection, was another unsatisfactory year. In this we were, doubtless, brought more into the world ; but we had a greater variety of temptation set before us, and there was still jealousy and estrangement in the dispositions of the gentry and the lower orders, particularly the manufacturers. I cannot say, indeed, that there was any increase of corruption among the rural portion of my people ; for, their vocation calling them to work apart in the purity of the free air of heaven, they were kept uncontaminated by that seditious infection which fevered the minds of the sedentary weavers and, working like flatulence in the stomachs of the cotton-spinners, sent up into their heads a vain and diseased fume of infidel philosophy.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

YEAR 1796

*Death of second Mrs Balwhidder—I look out for a third, and fix upon Mrs Nugent, a widow—Particulars of the courtship.*

THE prosperity of fortune is like the blossoms of spring, or the golden hue of the evening cloud : it delighteth the spirit, and passeth away.

In the month of February my second wife was gathered to the Lord. She had been very ill for some time with an income in her side, which no medicine could remove. I had the best doctors in the country-side to her ; but their skill was of no avail, their opinions being that her ail was caused by an internal abscess, for which physic has provided no cure. Her death was to me a great sorrow ; for she was a most excellent wife, industrious to a degree, and managed everything with so brisk a hand that nothing went wrong that she put it to. With her I had grown richer than any other minister in the presbytery ; but, above all, she was the mother of my bairns, which gave her a double claim upon me.

I laid her by the side of my first love, Betty Lanshaw, my own cousin that was, and I inscribed her name upon the same headstone; but time had drained my poetical vein, and I have not yet been able to indite an epitaph on her merits and virtues, (for she had an eminent share of both). Her greatest fault—the best have their faults—was an over-earnestness to gather gear: in the doing of which I thought she sometimes sacrificed the comforts of a pleasant fireside, for she was never in her element but when she was keeping the servants eident at their work. But if by this she subtracted something from the quietude that was most consonant to my nature, she has left cause, both in bank and bond, for me and her bairns to bless her great household activity.

She was not long deposited in her place of rest till I had occasion to find her loss. All my things were kept by her in a most perjink and excellent order; but they soon fell into an amazing confusion, (for, as she often said to me, I had a turn for heedlessness), insomuch that, although my daughter Janet was grown up, and able to keep the house, I saw that it would be necessary, as soon as decency would allow, for me to take another wife. I was moved to this by foreseeing that my daughter would in time be married, and taken away from me; but more on account of the servant lasses, who grew out of all bounds, verifying the proverb, “Well kens the mouse when the cat’s out of the house.” Besides this, I was



now far down in the vale of years, and could not expect to be long without feeling some of the penalties of old age, although I was still a hail<sup>1</sup> and sound man. It behoved me, therefore, to look in time for a helpmate to tend me in my approaching infirmities.

Upon this important concern I reflected, as I may say, in the watches of the night. Considering the circumstances of my situation, I saw it would not do for me to look out for an overly young woman, nor yet would it do for one of my ways to take an elderly maiden, ladies of that sort being liable to possess strong-set particularities. I therefore resolved that my choice should lie among widows of a discreet age. I had a glimmer in my mind of speaking to Mrs Malcolm; but, when I reflected on the saintly steadiness of her character, I was satisfied it would be of no use to think of her. Accordingly, I bent my brows, and looked towards Irville, which is an abundant trone<sup>2</sup> for widows and other single women; and I fixed my purpose on Mrs Nugent, the relict of a professor in the university of Glasgow, both because she was a well-bred woman, without any children to plea about the interest of my own two, and, likewise, because she was held in great estimation, by all who knew her, as a lady of a Christian principle.

It was some time in the summer, however, before I made up my mind to speak to her on the

<sup>1</sup> *Hail.* Hale.

<sup>2</sup> *Trone.* Market-place.

subject. One afternoon, in the month of August, I resolved to do so, and with that intent walked leisurely over to Irville ; and after calling on the Rev. Dr Dinwiddie, the minister, I stepped in, as if by chance, to Mrs Nugent's. I could see that she was a little surprised at my visit. However, she treated me with every possible civility, and her servant lass bringing in the tea-things in a most orderly manner, as punctually as the clock was striking, she invited me to sit still and drink my tea with her ; which I did, being none displeased to get such encouragement. However, I said nothing that time, but returned to the manse, very well content with what I had observed, which made me fain to repeat my visit. So, in the course of the week, taking Janet my daughter with me, we walked over in the forenoon, and called at Mrs Nugent's first, before going to any other house ; and Janet saying, as we came out to go to the minister's, that she thought Mrs Nugent an agreeable woman, I determined to knock the nail on the head without further delay.

Accordingly, I invited the minister and his wife to dine with us on the Thursday following ; and before leaving the town I made Janet, while the minister and me were handling a subject, as a sort of thing of common civility go to Mrs Nugent, and invite her also. Dr Dinwiddie was a gleg man, of a jocose nature, and guessing something of what I was ettling at<sup>1</sup> was very mirthful with

<sup>1</sup> *Ettling at.* Aiming at.

me ; but I kept my own counsel till a meet season.

On the Thursday the company as invited came, and nothing extraordinary was seen ; but in cutting up and helping a hen Dr Dinwiddie put one wing on Mrs Nugent's plate, and the other wing on my plate, and said, "There have been greater miracles than these two wings flying together ;" which was a sharp joke that caused no little merriment at the expense of Mrs Nugent and me. I, however, to show that I was none daunted, laid a leg also on her plate, and took another on my own, saying, in the words of the reverend doctor, "There have been greater miracles than that these two legs should lie in the same nest,"—which was thought a very clever come off ;—and, at the same time, I gave Mrs Nugent a kindly nip on her sonsy<sup>1</sup> arm, which was breaking the ice in as pleasant a way as could be. In short, before anything passed between ourselves on the subject, we were set down for a trysted pair ; and, this being the case, we were married as soon as a twelvemonth and a day had passed from the death of the second Mrs Balwhidder, and neither of us have had occasion to rue the bargain. It is, however, but a piece of justice due to my second wife to say that this was not a little owing to her good management ; for she had left such a well-plenished house that her successor said, We had nothing to do but to contribute to one another's happiness.

<sup>1</sup> *Sonsy.* Plump.

In this year nothing more memorable happened in the parish ; saving that the cotton-mill dam burst about the time of the Lammas flood, and the waters went forth like a deluge of destruction, carrying off much victual, and causing a vast of damage to the mills that are lower down the stream. It was just a prodigy to see how calmly Mr Cayenne acted on that occasion. For, being at other times as crabbed as a wud terrier, folk were afraid to tell him till he came out himself in the morning and saw the devastation ; at the sight of which he gave only a shrill whistle, and began to laugh at the idea of the men fearing to take him the news, as if he had not fortune and philosophy enough, as he called it, to withstand much greater misfortunes.

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